NARRATIVE SETTING AND DRAMATIC POETRY

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MARY KUNTZ

NARRATIVE SETTING AND DRAMATIC POETRY

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NARRATIVE SETTING AND DRAMATIC POETRY

BY

MARY KUNTZ

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For My Parents

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PREFACE

Previous studies of setting in Greek tragedy have focused on the physical representation of space in the tragic theater. This study takes a different approach, finding setting crucial as a device of composition that both links tragedy to its antecedents in narrative poetry and traditional tales and also distinguishes it, in performance, from these antecedents. Without wholly neglecting the visual representation of place in the theater, I am concerned primarily with spatial definition in the texts of tragedy and with the way these definitions participate in the poetry of tragedy and reflect upon tragedy's connection to earlier narrative forms and to the traditional tales that regularly supply tragic plots.

Part One considers these verbal descriptions of setting in tragedy and the expressive resources they offer to the tragic poet, focusing on setting as an introductory device and on the richly expressive associations of cult settings. The discussion in Part Two moves beyond these verbal descriptions of setting to a consideration of some of the ways in which spatial orientation functions to organize narratives and how it is transformed when a narrative is given visual form in performance. My focus here is on dramas of exile where the opposition of home and "not-home" is fundamental to the tale and to the tragedy. It has not been my intention to offer an exhaustive catalogue of tragic setting. My practice, nevertheless, in every chapter but the second has been to survey a number of relevant examples before giving more extended discussion to one or a very few plays.

This book is a revision of my doctoral dissertation, "Setting and Theme in Greek Tragedy," (Yale 1985), and to all who helped on that project I continue to be grateful. Revisions began with the assistance of a Summer Research Grant from the University of Oregon. For the acuity and kindness with which they read and criticized the early drafts of this work, I am very indebted to Victor Bers and Erling B. Holtsmark. Nat Kernell's support and his criticism have been invaluable. The faults that remain, despite the help that I have had, are of course my own.

INTRODUCTION

It is surely true that tragedy did not emerge in the sixth century quite so radically new as has often been supposed. Greek tragedy, for all its peculiarities, reflects in its forms and in its concerns close connections with public agonistic poetry performed in Greek cities in the sixth century. Simply a species of ancient poetry, as John Herington has insisted, tragedy is "poetry enlarged by a dimension."[1] The rhapsode, performing the Homeric poems before an audience, seems likely to have taken on different characters by modulating his voice, perhaps even by enacting particular movements or gestures. And the dances of the public choruses also may have enacted to some degree the subject of their singing as well. But it is only with tragedy that

> the characters of the ancient poetic tradition took on *separate* voices and *visible* forms and ... the dance floor on which they moved ceased to be a mere patch of tamped soil and became an imagined space, a space located anywhere in the world known to the Greeks.[2]

With tragedy performers assume an imagined identity with characters from the poetic tradition, appearing before the public both as themselves and as a fictive self. This is what was new for tragic performance and for the construction of the tragic poem. New also was the transformation of the place of performance which became, as Herington says, "an imagined space ... located anywhere in the world known to the Greeks," even as it remained the public space of performance and festival. The distinctive mimetic practices of tragedy reveal themselves thus doubly: not only in the representation of character, but also in the setting of the drama, in the insistence of the tragic form on the intersection of the fictional setting of the traditional tales with the place of performance.

The mark of the duality of character and actor in performance is the mask, which crucially functions both to replace the identity

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[1] Herington ix. Herington's work often is criticized for its exclusion of ritual in the consideration of sources shaping tragedy; nevertheless his study is extremely useful for its exploration of epic sources for tragedy and tragic performance.

[2] Herington xi.

of the actor with that of the character and to announce the fiction of this substitution.[3] Little is known about the tragic masks used in fifth-century performances of tragedy; this may in part be why this physical mechanism for the representation of character has easily been neglected by scholars, who have instead sought tragic character in the words of the tragic text. But for setting, despite an almost equal lack of evidence for the fifth century, it is the "mask" — the physical structures used to define the fictive space visually — that has received the greatest attention from scholars. Only the broadest outlines of the architectural structures that defined the acting area for the production of dramas in the fifth century can be sketched with any confidence. The exiguous archaeological and late literary evidence allows no more than estimates regarding the presence and configuration of dancing area, stage and backdrop. With very little on which to base their judgements, scholars nevertheless have strained to determine not just the basic outlines of the theater, but even whether, and to what degree of realistic detail, particular scenes for particular tragedies might have been represented on painted panels, or through properties like stage altars or statues. Most assume that the mimesis of space in tragedy was fundamentally realistic, that is, represented through a physical reshaping of the acting area or at least through a representation of space through perspective painting. But whatever their conclusions, whatever structures and scenic resources they posit for the ancient theater, these recreations of the physical setting of Greek tragedy necessarily derive more from imagination than from evidence.[4]

Neglected in most previous studies are the spatial definitions found in tragedy and their importance for shaping the imaginative context of the drama.[5] Read rather as though they were those descriptions of setting commonly offered to the modern audience in their printed programs, these verbal definitions have most often — and somewhat illogically — been used simply as clues for what was physically represented in the ancient theater.[6]

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[3] Two very different perspectives on the mask in tragic performance: John Jones 43-6; Froma Zeitlin 1990: 84-6.

[4] I summarize the evidence and the discussion in the appendix.

[5] Issacharoff 215 distinguishes that which is made visible to the audience, which he calls "mimetic space," from "diegetic space," which is "communicated verbally and not visually."

[6] Peter Arnott 1962 leads the protests against this approach; his and

In their consideration of setting, as never is the case for considerations of character, scholars want to know what exactly the audience saw before they are willing to consider the significance of what they heard. But not only is it impossible with our present information to determine how setting for any particular play was defined visually in the ancient theater, we also cannot be confident that verbally described setting is present in tragedy only as an aid to scenic design. That is why, without neglecting the unique role descriptions of setting in Greek tragedy must have played in the mimesis of space in tragic performance, it is necessary to consider, as for narrative poetry, how spatial description participates in the poem's verbal system of representation. In what follows, tragic setting is considered less for its connection to the visual realization of space in the tragic theater than as a device of composition with connections to earlier narrative forms and to the traditional tales that regularly supply tragic plots.

Setting is clearly a necessary part of plot; whether a story is offered to its audience dramatically or through narrative it must "take place" somewhere.[7] And because this "where" affects the nature of events as well as the audience's attitudes and expectations regarding the events, setting is an effective tool for shaping, and especially for introducing, the stories authors tell. In the *Odyssey*, where local details abound, setting is commonly used at the start of episodes in the hero's eventful journey home and to anticipate the evident concern of the poem with defining civilization by tracing what lies beyond its boundaries.[8] The thematic importance of setting is perhaps most apparent in the introduction to the Cyclops episode, in which, through the detailed description of both "Goat Island" (9. 116-48) and the Cyclops' own habitation (9. 216-30), Odysseus anticipates for his Phaeacean audience the challenge to civilized norms posed by the Cyclops. But descriptions of the physical landscape are used to introduce and in some measure thematically anticipate other adventures the hero narrates: the self-sufficient protectionism of Aeolus is expressed not only by the intermarriage of his sons with his daughters, but also

others' views are evaluated in the appendix.

[7] Issacharoff 211.

[8] Andersson 37-52 offers a useful overview of descriptions of space in the *Odyssey*.

by the physical enclosure of his floating island home by "a bronze citadel, not to be broken, and a sheer cliff" (10.3-7). Before Odysseus' men encounter Circe, her house is presented as at once a welcome haven, a shining house of stones in a forest clearing, and a place of menace with the lions and wolves that rove its grounds (10.210-19). By contrast Calypso's island home, given extensive description as Hermes makes his way to inform the goddess of Zeus' dictates, is so pleasing and attractive that "even an immortal, coming upon it, would wonder seeing it and would delight in his spirit" (5.65-74). The beauty of the place reinforces Calypso's own attractiveness, and this, when the hero rejects both her and her home in favor of Penelope and Ithaca, will reveal the magnitude of Odysseus' longing for that particular place, which, while it may not be so beautiful as this island, is nevertheless home (5.201-224).

The identification of the hero with the place of his birth is assumed in every encounter in which a stranger is asked "who he is, and from where" (3.71, 7.237, etc.). Nestor and Pylos, Agamemnon and Argos, Odysseus and Ithaca: each hero is closely tied to a place, each city is closely associated with its hero. This seems a part of the tradition from which the Homeric poems emerge and in itself makes the place name an effective introduction to the hero. In the *Odyssey*, the metonymic possibilities of this association are fully exploited when the poet uses a visit to the home of the hero on Ithaca as an introduction to Odysseus himself. Telemachos' need for his father and Penelope's for her husband, as well as the suitor's demonstrable inability to fill his place trace the outline of this hero who will not himself be encountered for many hundreds of lines in the poem. Odysseus' arrival home, too, is marked by a reassertion of the identity of the hero with his homeland. Awaking on the shores of his long-sought land, Odysseus cannot recognize the place, for Athena has disguised its features, just as she will disguise Odysseus' own so that she may ensure the success of his homecoming. Disguise is the mark of Odysseus, and his recognition of Ithaca is the first step in his successful return home, which will be complete only when he is himself recognized by Penelope.[9]

The close connection of hero and home is not tied to the epic

[9] Murnaghan 1987.

form; in origins, it is probably rooted in the traditional narratives treated in these poems.[10] For the tragedians, the connection will provide a succinct way of introducing context, character and often theme as well. The house that cannot tell its tale at the beginning of the *Agamemnon* does nothing to identify precisely what is to follow, but it contributes to the general foreboding that builds in the play until the climactic murders. The temporary haven at Colonus that Antigone finds for her father cannot in its initial description suggest the odd turn of events that will follow in this Sophoclean play, but it does anticipate the final welcome that Oedipus will find in that place. Playwrights will use descriptions of setting at the beginnings of plays not simply to map the imaginative setting on to the physical structures of the stage, but also to set mood and anticipate plot or thematic developments.

Beyond its introductory function, the expressive potential of setting for Greek tragedy derives in large measure from the continuity between the world of tragedy and that of the tragic audience. This continuity is initially established by the specificity of geographic locale in the myths that are the basis for the tragic plots.[11] These tales do not take place in some generic setting — a cottage in the woods, or a castle in some faraway land. Greek traditional tales are noteworthy for their geographic specificity. Events in tragedy are thought of as occuring in the dimly historical past, but in a world that is geographically identical to the world of the performance. The landscape of tragedy, the immediate context of dramatic action, is also, by convention, realistic,[12] containing recognizable features like the palace or temple that are the regular backdrops of drama, or the altars and statues that may at times fill its foreground.

One consequence of this essential familiarity of the tragic setting is that it rarely requires, or is given, attention in the poetry unless its significance goes beyond providing the events of the drama with a physical context. Another, more interesting con-

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[10] Frame 1978.

[11] Bacon 1961 details the geographic references in Greek tragedy (Aeschylus 45-59, Sophocles 94-101, Euripides 155-167). See also Hall 21-40.

[12] This does not exclude supernatural phenomena, such as an altar bursting into flames (*Bacchae* 597-9, cf. 623f.). Kitto's remarks 1950: 315-6 on the realistic basis of tragedy probably go too far; a more balanced view is offered by Kamerbeek 1960: 1-25.

sequence is that setting, as an element in tragedy shared between the fiction of the drama and the real world, may be used to draw on the audience's associations with a certain place or type of place to add meaningful resonance to a work. Just as a character may win sympathy by the audience's at least partial identification with his situation or actions, setting may elicit a response that relies upon the audience's prior knowledge and perception of a place. In most cases it is irrelevant whether this knowledge derives from experience or literature: few in the theater of Dionysus will have seen Troy; even fewer will not have extensive associations with that place.[13] These prior associations may be selectively evoked and shaped by the poet's art to direct attention to themes or images important to the drama.

Settings that offer the greatest potential for dramatic exploitation, then, are those that bring to the work the richest fund of associations. This is undoubtedly one reason why cult settings are the most common sort of setting to be meaningfully developed by the poets. Sacred locales offer to the poet the rituals of the cult, its association with a god, and often, political significance as well, for integration into his work. Representation of the functioning of a cult is often necessary for the plot of a tragedy. Sacrifice, the receiving of oracles, or, even more broadly, supplication, are all active elements in tragic plots and are echoes of actual religious practice. Hence, cult, by its nature, provides a clear link between the tragedy and the real world of the audience. But in tragedy, where the plots are based on the traditional stories of gods and heroes, the implicit connection of a cult with myth is at least as important. Cult settings—altars, temples or groves—are regularly used in Greek tragedy to facilitate the realistic representations of the mythic gods. This gives the poets a double mechanism for the representation of divinity in their dramas: one belonging wholly to myth, and the other shared between the mythic world and that of the audience.

These characteristics of cult setting are true even of the most minor local cult, which may not itself be known by the audience, but which nevertheless will be recognized as a type. But if the poet uses a well-known and powerful cult site like the Delphic oracle

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[13] The fifth century possessed a general sense of where the Troy of epic was located in the geography of the real world; see Cook 92, n. 2.

of Apollo or the Temple of Demeter at Eleusis, he has access for his work to a more extensive range of associations that are specific to these sites but which, because of the fame of the place, would nevertheless be recognized. Such locales are some of the most powerfully expressive in tragedy.

The use of cult settings as the nexus of action and meaning in drama has its antecedent in another sort of narrative poetry closely tied to the Homeric poems in diction and perhaps in performance: the cult hymns of the seventh and sixth centuries. The *Hymn to Demeter* and the hymns to Delian and Delphian Apollo are all strongly localized, tying praise of the god to a specific cult locale and the ritual practiced there. Lesky says of the *Hymn to Demeter*: "The story of the rape of Persephone, of Demeter's grief, and of the reunion of mother and daughter is here so closely tied up with the immemorial mystery cult of Eleusis that the poem can be taken as a sacred history of the great religious center."[14] Narrative and cult are inextricably bound together in this hymn; in performance the connection would certainly have been clearer still. Demeter's command, that the Eleusinians build her a temple and perform rites that she will teach them (270-2), must surely have gained point if the narrative in which it is recounted were performed, as seems likely, by Eleusinians before the goddess' temple.

The *Hymn to Delian Apollo*, too, exploits the connection between narrative and performance context when the poet closes the aetiological tale of Apollo's birth on Delos by addressing the god directly and describing those who celebrate him at his temple on Delos (140-64). The cult locale is made the point of a satisfying juncture of the mythic stories of the god with the actual ritual practice. Not only the god, but Delos joins the mythic past to the immediacy of the poem's performance. In this we see the close, almost metonymic link joining people to places that pervades epic and which was discussed above for the *Odyssey*. But we also see, significantly before drama emerges as a public poetic form at Athens, the careful exploitation of the intersection of narrative and performance locale in the festival hymns to the gods.

The tragedians are the heirs to this tradition. Tragic poetry, performed in Dionysus' precinct at the base of the Acropolis, only

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[14] Lesky 1963: 84; H. Fränkel 1975: 246f.

rarely reinacted the narratives of that particular god and drew directly upon associations with the immediate setting of the Dionysiac cult.[15] More often, the tragedians used this strategy of linking performance space to narrative space as a way of intruding into traditional narratives the immediate public concerns of the Athenian polis. The audience of Greek tragedy is not invited by the narrative to join imaginatively the ageless celebration of a god, as in the *Hymn to Delian Apollo,* but they are usually present, written into play after play as jury, assembly, townsfolk. And the acting area crucially links the political actions of the drama to the politics of public celebration.

Local details and specific place names offer the poets of narrative and of drama significant expressive resources. But more important than these perhaps is the pervasive use in Greek traditional tales of spatial oppositions and intersections as structuring devices within the narrative.[16] In the *Iliad,* despite its noticeable lack of local description either to introduce or amplify scenes,[17] extensive

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[15] Herington 5-6 and Chapter 3.

[16] Charles Segal 1982: 78-9 briefly treats this strategy in his discussion of the *Bacchae.*

[17] Neither the disposition of the Greek ships on the shore, nor the layout of the Trojan troops beyond the city's walls, nor even the natural topography of the battle plain are ever extensively described. Certainly, details of layout and scene emerge from the narrative of the *Iliad,* but, as Andersson 16-7 has noted:

> We are not given a plan of Priam's palace or an understanding of its position in the city. We have no real perception of the distances on the plain between city and camp. We know that the camp is fortified with a trench and a wall, in which there is a gate, but the exact arrangement is unclear ... Within the camp ... exact arrangement is elusive ... The situation is not visualized, and no reader of the *Iliad* will be able to diagram the camp without undertaking a special analysis.

Physical features are mentioned in the course of the narrative, but there is no effort to create imaginatively a realistic landscape in which the audience can situate the action. Instead, elements of scene appear singly, or in simple groups, to give a sort of instantaneous vividness to particular deeds or encounters. Ilos' tomb functions in this way, appearing first as a rallying point for Hektor and his advisors (10 415) and then later as a support to Paris as he fires his arrows (11 369-71). Andersson 35 characterizes this use as, "Tantamount to a stage property," finding something inherently theatrical in the sparseness of details of setting in Homer. It is noticeable that in the *Iliad* attention is often called to what some character sees, but the sight itself receives little attention as the response to the sight is what interests this poet. For the *Iliad,* space is defined not descriptively but by the human action and human emotions that fill it. Agathe Thornton 160-1 says of the "concrete

use is made of such divisions to provide perspective on the warfare. The battlefield where the warriors meet to fight is the primary locus of the epic, but scenes on Olympus, within Troy and even in the intimate interior space of Achilles' tent, provide important commentaries on events in the field. The banquet of the gods that closes the first book contrasts with and comments on the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles that precedes it. And throughout the poem Olympus provides a vantage point from which men's battles may be viewed, commented on and affected by the divinities who watch from above.

In a similar way, Achilles' tent is a place apart from the army and the fighting from which individual and idiosyncratic views of the war emerge. When Odysseus, Phoinix, and Ajax come to Achilles' own place apart from the other Greeks and attempt to introduce there the public communal values of the army, they are rebutted by the hero, and we are treated to a perspective on the war that holds up for scrutiny many of the presuppostions of such warfare. So also, in the final book of the poem, when Priam enters Achilles' camp to ransom the body of his son, their exchange, made possible only by the enclosed privacy of the Greek hero's place, challenges many of the divisions that define the conflict; Priam's departure from this singular place marks a return to the divisions defined by the war. Achilles' camp has a peculiar status in this poem as a place apart from the fighting and from the community of warriors and their unifying values; events there, like those on Olympus, are used by the poet as commentaries on the epic warfare.

But more than either of these places, the poet has found particularly useful for his narrative the spatial opposition between the events on the plain and the response given to them in the city. Any war narrative is necessarily structured on a spatial antithesis: two armies meet on the field and much of the action is taken up with the ebb and flow of battle as it moves back and forth between the two camps. This is so in the *Iliad*, but it is events within the city, set apart from the fighting but depending on its outcome, that give perspective to the events on the field.[18] As one army fights to

picturesque features of the plain" of Troy that they "aid the singer as 'signposts' along the path of his song."

[18] For the nature of the Homeric city see Stephen Scully 1990: 114-27.

defend Troy and the other strives to breech her walls, those who watch from the city's walls articulate what is at stake in the battles that men fight. Into the preparations for the duel between Paris and Menelaus, Helen on the walls of Troy intrudes recollection of the past, of the sources of the conflict that occupy the men busy on the field below (3. 139-244). Andromache, who encounters Hector as she returns from a similar teixoskop□a, instead looks to the future as she traces in her pleas what it will mean to her and to their son when Hector is dead and Troy captured (6. 390-502). Her words provide Hector's actions with a context that gives value to his fighting. They are words that will be echoed and reiterated later, in the lamentations that measures the loss of his death and anticipate the destruction of the city (Priam, 22. 25-76; Hecuba, 22. 430-6; Andromache, 22. 437-59) .

Hector's city, Achilles' tent and the gods' home on Olympus: all are places apart from the battlefield, from the primary locus of action in this epic. And each secondary locale is used to provide perspective, a commentary of sorts, on the clash of warriors on the battle field. In tragedy, this spatial opposition, which is such a fruitful structuring device of epic, remains important, and yet is necessarily reshaped for performance. With the realization in tragedy of a fictive place in the place of performance, the action cannot move as easily from one place to another, cannot give equal representation to every locale in the narrative. Instead, one place, chosen as the dramatic setting, is given greater vividness through visual as well as verbal definition. The other places, however largely they figure in the tale, become secondary to the place defined by enactment in the space of the theater. Troy functions in this way for the *Agamemnon*, as does the palace interior; each locale, though crucial to the enacted events, find its way into tragedy only through the imaginative reconstructions of participants or the narratives of messengers.[19] So also with Athens in the *Ion* of Euripides, which place provides the crucial background for the events enacted before Apollo's temple at Delphi. And in the *Bacchae*, events from Mt. Cithaeron, played out only in imagination and narrative, inform the action that takes place before the Theban palace. For each of these plays, the opposition between the

[19] For an overview of references to scenery in Euripidean messenger speeches: De Jong 1991: 148-60.

dramatic locale and those places lying beyond the view of the audience is as powerfully exploited as such oppositions of space are in the *Iliad.*

In their adaptations of traditional narrative tales for the stage, tragedians regularly defined the dramatic locale as a central civic space before a palace or temple (these structures given shape visually by the *skene*).[20] There are exceptions, of course—Ajax's tent, Medea's female-filled enclave, Philoctetes' cave—but these gain significance as relatively more private places into which public demands intrude. Standing behind the *skene* or beyond the civic space defined by the acting area are places whose events impinge upon the dramatic fiction. But what the audience is invited to see in the acting area is a fictional political context that joins with the political context of performance. This characteristic choice of setting may reflect an inherently realistic bias of tragedy: because they did not have the scenic capabilities to represent convincingly on stage, for example, a battle, the tragedians regularly chose instead for their dramatic locale the city most affected by the battle. Or, it may be that this convention of locating dramatic action in public places and implicating the audience in the civic concerns of the enacted events is evidence of a continuity in tragedy with the use of setting in festival hymns to the gods. Certainly, political settings reflect the political concerns of tragedy. But whatever the reason for the use of political places as the usual setting for tragic action, one effect for tragedy has been to make it as a genre take on the characteristic of a commentary of sorts on epic events. The sack of Troy and the murder of Agamemnon, in the *Agamemnon,* become events described in the reports of others and in the response of the chorus; they are the background to the public crisis at Argos enacted before the Athenians in their theater. Their significance is reshaped both by their removal from the center of the performance and by the replacement of the city in that position of prominence. Neither her brothers' deaths nor Antigone's could realistically be enacted on the stage, but by shifting these from the center of the narrated tale, the focus in Sophocles' tragedy is shifted from the events themselves to their significance. And so it is that Creon, in whose person the significance of Antigone's tragedy finds fullest expression, is the

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20 Zeitlin 1990: 75.

tragic figure that holds centerstage at play's end. Whether from necessity or artistic choice, the tragedians reshaped traditional narrative by putting at the center of their dramas scenes that comment, like Andromache to Hector, or Priam with Achilles in the *Iliad*, on the larger epic events. Tragedy comes to provide a new way of reading the traditional tales, one that decenters action and replaces at the heart of these stories enactments of effect and consequence. Dramatic setting cannot claim responsibility for this transformation, but it is surely implicated. The civic space of tragedy and of tragic performance becomes the space apart from epic narrative, reflecting upon this past and upon its implications for the immediate here and now. Setting participates in this process and as such requires closer scrutiny as a device of narrative that became transformed into a richly expressive device of tragedy.

In what follows I have organized my discussion of setting around the categories of narrative setting outlined above: introduction, cult settings, and spatial opposition. I begin by considering the expressive use of setting as an introductory or anticipatory device (Chapter One). A number of works are surveyed, but extensive attention is given to the *Eumenides* and the *Electra* plays of Sophocles and Euripides; the *Philoctetes* and the *Oedipus at Colonus*. The second chapter introduces consideration of the less common and less obvious uses of setting through a detailed discussion of Euripides' *Ion* and the uses of space and spatial definition in that play. Cult settings play an important part in tragedy, and in Chapter Three I take up the function of setting in supplication scenes, a plot pattern common to tragedy that is closely tied to a particular place. Here again, I combine a survey of several plays with more extensive analyses of three plays of Euripides (the *Andromache*, *Heracles*, and *Suppliant Women*, as well as the *Oedipus at Colonus* of Sophocles).

In Part Two, I turn from discussion of more literal local descriptions to a consideration of the adaptation in tragedy of the spatial oppositions that are inherent structuring devices in traditional tales. In Chapter Four, I consider the particularly rich antinomy of home and what may broadly be termed "not-home" in the narrative of the hero in Greek traditional tales and the way that this opposition of enclosed security to dangerous exposure is fruitfully exploited by the tragedians. Of particular interest in this

chapter is the association of gender and space in Greek traditional tales which unites the home and the woman as mutual expressions of the hero's self. Evident in epic in the figures of Andromache or Penelope, this identity of the female with the interior spaces of the home gives the tragedians an effective way in drama of giving that space a voice. The close identity of women with the home of the hero makes of the female exile a particular problem; in Chapter Five, I consider how Euripides' has created and exploited the problematic female exile in the *Helen, Iphigenia Taurica,* and *Medea.* I conclude by returning to the narrative of the hero and considering the alienation of hero from home in the *Prometheus Bound, Philoctetes,* and *Oedipus Coloneus.*

A historic connection linking tragic setting with setting in narrative poetry is reasonable to assume, but cannot ever, I think, be unquestionably established. Nor is what follows an argument, in the first instance, for such a connection. Rather, I have posited that tragedy, in adopting stories from earlier narratives, adopted also the spatial assumptions of such stories, but that the mimesis of space, which in part distinguishes tragedy from epic, makes necessary some distinctive transformations of the spatial orientation of these narratives. I have sought to trace the unique resources setting offers to tragedy, as well as to suggest some of the ways in which the use of this narrative device reflects on the participation of this hybrid genre in the larger tradition of Greek poetry.

PART ONE

PLACE NAMES AND LOCAL DESCRIPTIONS

CHAPTER ONE

THE INTRODUCTORY FUNCTION OF SETTING

When Odysseus, sitting among the Phaeaceans and narrating his adventures, introduces his encounter with the Cyclops, he does so by describing at some length an island inhabited by wild goats that lies off the coast of the Cyclops' land (*Odyssey* 9.116-41). The island is not the place where the Cyclops lives and it figures in the action only as a stopping off place where Odysseus spends the night before leaving all but his own ship there and going on to the Cyclops' land. As such it hardly justifies the extensive and particularized description that it receives from Odysseus. But Odysseus' description of the island and his wonder at the undeveloped resources he finds there is important as introducing and anticipating the conflict between Odysseus and the primitive Cyclops that is to follow.

After Odysseus lands on the shores of the Cyclops' country, he finds a cave and other signs of pastoral life, which provide for Odysseus — and his audience — the first evidence of the cave-dweller. The cave's inhabitant is away, and in his absence Odysseus and his companions explore the cave, finding evidence of an affluent if rustic life. From this Odysseus deduces that he may benefit by awaiting the return of the cave's inhabitant and an exchange of guest-gifts.[1] When the surprising inhabitant of the cave does finally return, the action will move beyond descriptions of place to action, but here, at the story's beginning, descriptions of place anticipate succinctly and clearly both character and theme.

The usefulness of local descriptions for introducing action, defining character and anticipating theme, apparent in this episode from the *Odyssey*, was not lost on the tragedians, who seem to have adopted this device for their art from epic along with the traditional tales. In many plays, we find a simple reliance on the

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[1] This initial exploration of a person's home in his absence, a common element of folk tale (e.g. Goldilocks' exploration of the home of the Three Bears), is an effective literary device for raising expectations about a character before he actually appears. Compare the exploration of Philoctetes' cave in Sophocles' play.

metonymic association between a particular place and a well-known tale — of Troy and the Greek victory, for example — to identify for the tragic audience the proximate locale of the dramatized story in the tradition as well as in space.[2] In a number of tragedies, however, this rather obvious use of local names to identify a broad tradition in myth is made specific and more extensive as the poet, through details of setting, anticipates not simply the traditional tale, but also his own interest in the story. Such uses of local description, unique for each play in extent and details, take setting far beyond its practical, local function and make of it a device of composition complex in significance and difficult to delimit. Tracing the boundaries of this device in the prologues of tragedy is the task of this chapter.

The Location of Stories Within the Tradition

Geographic locale in most of the myths that form the basis for the tragic plots is extremely specific. The traditional stories of the Greeks do not occur in some generic setting; there is not, for Greek tragedy, the cottage in the woods or the castle of German folk tales. Oedipus rules not "a city long ago," but Thebes, a particular and real city; the story of the sacrifice of Iphigenia is set at Aulis because that is where, in myth, her sacrifice is said to have occurred.[3] To move these events to a different place is to tell a different story. Geographic locale in tragedy is as fixed in the tradition as the names of the characters or, in their broadest outline, the events.[4]

The tragedians accept the fixed locales of the traditional stories and exploit them, almost metonymically, to introduce their dramas. In some plays this is the first, or nearly the first information given in the play indicating the story that is to follow.[5] The *Seven* begins with the address, "Citizens of Cadmus" (Κάδμου πολῖται,

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[2] See E. R. Dodds's discussion 1960: 61-2 of Euripides' introductory forms.

[3] Rhys Carpenter 38ff. discusses the realistic setting of Greek traditional tales.

[4] But see, for example, Thucydides 2.29.3, where the historian distinguishes by locale two men named Tereus, whom, as he says, "many poets" wrongly identify with each other.

[5] E.g. Aeschylus: *Seven* 1, *Ag.* 3, *PB* 1-2; Sophocles: *Ajax* 3-4, *OT* 1, *El.* 1-11, *Phil.* 1-2; Euripides: *Alc.* 1-2, *Supp.* 1-2, *Ion* 5, *Tro.* 4, *El.* 1, *Hel.* 1-7, *Phoen.* 4, *Bac.* 1. See J. D. Denniston's comment on the form of Euripidean prologues in Gilbert Murray 1933: 124, n. 1.

1), which identifies by metonomy, in the first line, the Theban setting of the drama. In the *Oedipus Tyrannus,* Sophocles has done much the same thing, giving Oedipus the opening address, "Children, young offspring of Cadmus of old," (Ὦ τέκνα, Κάδμου τοῦ πάλαι νέα τροφή, 1), where through the same metonomy Thebes is identified as the dramatic locale.[6] But as these examples show, the naming of the city alone can point only generally to a broad sector of the tradition. The identification of Thebes in the opening line of either play does not specifically indicate the story that is to follow and might be introducing any of the large number of traditional stories connected to that city. But if, as often, the place name is joined to the name of a character in the drama, it directs the audience's expectations more particularly to the story that is to be enacted. In both of these plays the speaker identifies himself within a few lines of naming the locale (*Seven,* Ἐτεοκλέης 6; *OT,* Οἰδίπους 8) and these names together constitute the initial introduction given to the audience.

In these works it suffices for the poets' purposes merely to identify the place of the dramatic action. But in the prologues of some plays the identification of geographic setting is used to provide fuller information to the audience about the story to be enacted. For example, the coupling of proper name with place name in the opening lines of Sophocles' *Electra* is used to delineate broadly the situation at the beginning of the play. When the Paedagogus addresses his young companion with,

> Ὦ τοῦ στρατηγήσαντος ἐν Τροίαι ποτὲ
> Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖ
>
> Child of Agamemnon, who once commanded at Troy
> (1-2)[7]

and follows that identification of Orestes with this announcement of the place to which they have come:

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[6] Pickard-Cambridge 1946: 36f. discusses the similarity in the beginnings of these works. The use in both examples here, and commonly throughout Greek poetry, of Cadmus to designate the city of Thebes demonstrates in itself the commonplace metonomy the playwrights here exploit. Note in particular that the stories to be dramatized have little to do with Cadmus himself; the ancient hero is named in these plays only as a way of naming Thebes.

[7] All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

> ... νῦν ἐκεῖν' ἔξεστί σοι
> παρόντι λεύσσειν, ὧν πρόθυμος ἦσθ' ἀεί.
> τὸ γὰρ παλαιὸν Ἄργος οὑπόθεις τόδε
>
> Now it is possible for you, since you are present,
> to look upon that for which you were always eager,
> for this is ancient Argos, for which you longed.
> (2-4)

he introduces the story by locating it precisely in the traditional saga of the Atreidae at Argos.[8] Euripides has made still greater use of the usual naming of locale at the beginning of his *Electra.* He begins the play with a formal apostrophe of Argos, which accords the city a certain grandeur befitting its heroic connections. These are ennumerated in what follows, as Argos is made to reflect the glory of Agamemnon's expedition to Troy:

> Ὦ γῆς †παλαιὸν Ἄργος†, Ἰνάχου ῥοαί,
> ὅθεν ποτ' ἄρας ναυσὶ χιλίαις Ἄρη
> ἐς γῆν ἔπλευσε Τρῳάδ' Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ.
>
> Ancient Argos, Streams of Inachos,
> from which once, carrying Ares in a thousand ships,
> Lord Agamemnon sailed to the Trojan land.
> (1-3)[9]

The city is joined to the fortunes of its royal family, and this trumpeting of its glory, and Agamemnon's, is used at the beginning of the prologue to provide a measure of the glory that is gone from Argos with the murder of Agamemnon and the absence of his avenger. Even though Agamemnon is not a character in the drama, the coupling of his name with that of Argos here is nevertheless effective in introducing the story, for through this events antecedent to the drama are recalled and what is to follow anticipated.

The *Helen* perhaps most clearly demonstrates the way setting is used to introduce a work by exploiting the audience's knowledge of the traditions that provide the basis for the tragic plots. Euripides here dramatizes a variant version of Helen's story, one that has

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8 Seale 1982: 56-7, Kaibel *ad* 2-10. For the location of the story at Mycenae: E. Fraenkel 1950:*ad* 24 and references there.

9 Denniston 1939: 55-6 offers a full discussion of the setting of the play and the particular difficulties posed by the descriptive language used in these lines. On the crux: Diggle 1981b: *ad loc.* παλαιὸς (vel -ᾶς) ἀρδμός Herwerden, παλαιᾶς ὅρμος Zuntz cf. *Hec.* 450 (lyric). Neither suggestion is consistent with what I judge to be the rhetorical intention of the passage.

her wait out the Trojan War in Egypt. This version, though less well-known than that of the Homeric epics, was certainly familiar to Euripides' audience. Hesiod, it seems, told of a phantom of Helen and not Helen herself being taken to Troy. And the lyric poet Stesichorus also told this story of Helen, perhaps placing her, as Euripides does, at Egypt for the duration of the war.[10] There was even a contemporary account of Helen's sojourn in Egypt in Herodotus.[11] Thus, when Euripides has Helen introduce the play by identifying first and at length the locale as Egypt (1-15) and only afterwards naming herself and explaining how she has come to this land (16-55), he alerts the audience to the virtuous character of this particular Helen, indicating the variant version of her story as the basis for his drama. His use of this elaborate description of Egypt to introduce the play is noted by Aristophanes, who initiates a parody of the play in the *Thesmophoriazusae* with the opening lines of Helen's prologue speech.[12]

The characteristic introductory use of geographic place-names is expanded in a number of plays in which the dramatic locale is joined in the prologue to a second, more distant place; together these places define the narrative, and often as well, the thematic boundaries of the work. The mention of both Argos and Troy in the prologue to Euripides' *Electra*, discussed earlier, fufills this function, linking the vengeance of Orestes to the prior events of the Trojan War and measuring the distance between the former glory of the Greek commander and the present degradation of his family. In Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women* it is Egypt, the distant source of the suppliants and their crisis, that is identified first in the play (3-4); Argos, the dramatic locale, is named only after-

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[10] Hesiod, fr. 358 M.-W.: πρῶτος Ἡσίοδος περὶ τῆς Ἑλένης τὸ εἴδωλον παρήγαγε. It is Stesichorus, however, who receives most attention for telling this story of Helen: Plato *Phaedrus* 243a, Isocrates *Helen* 64. And some have proposed that Στησίχορος be substituted for Ἡσίοδος here, making the lyric poet the source of the variant (Woodbury 1967:159 contains a full bibliography on the problem). A fragment of a commentary on the lyric poets (P.Oxy. 2506, fr. 26, col. 1; no. 193 *PMG*, Page), which is dated by Page to the first or early second century A. D. (P. Oxy XXIX, p. 1), says that in one palinode Stesichorus had Helen remain in Egypt with Proteus, as Herodotus and Euripides have it (so Bowra 1963: 250-1). Woodbury 163-5, however, after a review of the ancient sources for the story, disputes this. Dale 1967: xvii-xxiv summarizes the debate.

[11] 2.112-20; How and Wells 223.

[12] See Rau 1967: 56-8.

wards as the Danaids trace what drove them to Greece and supplication (15). Egypt and Argos bound the story of the Danaids, and Aeschylus has used the two geographic points to define the crucial background to the tragedy.

This use of two places, and travel between them, to introduce relevant background becomes a common strategy in the prologues of a number of Euripidean tragedies. The nurse's lament which begins the *Medea* traces the journey of the Argo to Colchis (1-2) and its return, with Medea, first to Iolcus (6-7) and then to Corinth, where the drama takes place (10).[13] This distance between Medea's birth-home and the home she has found and now lost at Corinth will be measured again and again in Medea's lamentations and recriminations that will follow, but here, at the play's beginning, mention of these places provides a succinct introduction to the complete tale of which Euripides has dramatized but a part.[14] Similarly, in the *Andromache* the dramatic locale, Phthia, is named only after Andromache apostrophizes, in the play's opening line, the place of her birth: "Shape of my Asian land, city Thebes" ('Ασιάτιδος γῆς σχῆμα, Θηβαία πόλι, 1). Beginning with this source of her own heroic origins, Andromache recounts her movement from noble birth to slavery at Phthia, offering a poignantly personal commentary on the Trojan War. Her lament for the distant and irretrievable past is an appropriate introduction to this tragedy that will explore the nature of the connection between the heroic past and the present.[15] In the *Bacchae* Euripides has exploited the double origins of Dionysus, from Greek Thebes and Asian Phrygia or Lydia, to announce the disturbing indeterminancy of this mysterious god. Dionysus proclaims in the prologue that he has come home to Thebes (1) from Asia Minor (13-14), but his journey becomes, in the account he gives of it, as much foreign invasion as it is homecoming, even as the god himself will emerge in the action that follows both beneficient and dire.[16] Geography here is closely linked to identity. In

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[13] Page 1938: 61-4 offers a useful survey of other sources for the full tale referred to here.

[14] See below, Chapter 5, pp. 119 ff.

[15] See below, Chapter 3, pp. 64 ff. Stevens' remarks 1971: 84-6 on the form of the prologue and on the language of this first apostrophe are quite useful.

[16] Dodds 1960: 61-2 compares Dionysus' opening words here with those of Aphrodite at the beginning of the *Hippolytus*.

the *Ion*, however, the geographic opposition of Athens to Delphi is initially used merely as a rhetorical device in the prologue, allowing Hermes to introduce first the relevant background of events at Delphi (5-6) and then augment these with those earlier events at Athens (7-8). Athens is a place distant from the Delphic scene of the drama, but unlike Medea's Colchis or Andromache's Thebes, it is not a place associated only with the past; the history that began at Athens and has moved to Delphi for the space of the drama will in the end return to Athens again. For the *Ion*, perhaps to an extent unusual for extant tragedy, the two loci used in the prologue to define the narrative background continue to function throughout the drama with a sort of complementarity to provide a larger context in which the dramatic events gain meaning. For Euripidean prologues in particular the joint naming of more than one place is effective in introducing the work not only by anticipating its action, as we have seen it do in the previous examples, but often also by looking toward central thematic concerns that will emerge from subsequent action.

Transitions

The *Eumenides*

Perhaps the clearest example of the significant introductory function of setting is to be found in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus. The main action of that drama is located at Athens in the newly-constituted Court of the Areopagus,[17] but the play begins at Apollo's oracle at Delphi, where Orestes has fled pursued by his mother's Furies. He has come, as he explained that he would at the end of the *Choephoroe*, as a suppliant seeking protection from the Furies (*Cho.* 1034-9). Apollo, unexpectedly, will explain that he cannot absolve Orestes of the crime, but that the matricide must be tried at Athens.

The trial that forms the substance of the drama and the con-

[17] There is an intermediate scene of supplication at Athena's temple on the Acropolis (235-566). Indications of the temple are vague at best (δῶμα, βρέτας 242) and indications of the location of the trial on the Areopagus are limited to deictic pronouns (685, 688) and to the aetiological implications of Athena's speech (681ff.). Lloyd-Jones 45; Taplin 1977: 390-1; Pickard-Cambridge 1946: 45 support the second scene change. Opposed to a second scene change is Wilamowitz 1914:180-3, Ridgeway 1907: 163-8. Note that Euripides places Orestes' trial on the Areopagus in *Electra* 1258ff, *Orestes* 1650ff., *IT* 961.

clusion to the trilogy is an innovation to the traditional tale. The judgement and expiation of Orestes' crime is the subject of numerous accounts and representations; not all include Apollo but none before Aeschylus include Athena, Athens and the Court of the Aeropagus. By bringing Orestes to Athens and the Aeropagus, Aeschylus brings the issues he has been developing in the earlier plays of the trilogy home to his Athenian audience. Locating the trial at Athens, he interjects a consideration of the recent and controversial reform of the Court of the Areopagus at Athens into the peaceful resolution of the curse of the Atreidae through the acquittal of Orestes. Just as this resolution of the curse is possible only with the Furies' acceptance of a new status, so too, Aeschylus urges, must the altered status of the court, here represented as the original status, be accepted if further conflict is to be avoided.[18] Aeschylus' evident interest in extending the significance of this traditional story to a contemporary political concern requires that this tragedy be set at Athens. But the poet begins the play at Delphi, using the opening scene at Apollo's oracle as a means of introducing into the *Oresteia* this contemporary institution and of providing a transition between the first two plays and the conclusion of the trilogy.

The scene at Delphi makes explicit the authority of the Attic court to determine Orestes' guilt or innocence. Apollo himself directs his suppliant to go to Athena for a judgement, transferring the authority that might reasonably be thought to reside in him[19] to the goddess and the court she establishes. Orestes has every reason to seek Apollo's help: the god commanded him to avenge his father and assured him that he would not be held accountable for the deed. Even his appeal to Apollo's oracle has the god's authority (*Cho.* 269-305, 1029-39). First establishing Orestes' easily justified dependence on Apollo, Aeschylus then makes the god the source of the announcement of the Athenian court's jurisdiction for this case of matricide. In this way the introduction of

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18 The best discussion of the political implications of the trilogy is Dover 1957: 230-7; I am not convinced, however, that political allegory is necessarily excluded by the perceived reality of the gods in this conflict as he contends; the meanings here and elsewhere seem able to coexist. See also Podlecki 1966: 80-100, Costa 1962: 22-34, Dodds 1932: 233-45, 1960b: 19-31, Bonner and Smith 1930: vol. I, 125ff.

19 But see Thompson's account 1966: 231-2 of traditions of Orestes' "cure" that omit Apollo (the most notable, of course, being Homer).

the contemporary Athenian institution into the drama is supported by a mythic source of obvious legitimacy.

The court itself, duly constituted of Athenian citizens but presided over by the goddess actually present in human form, shows the same deliberate merging of the mythic with the real that was first evinced in the opening scene at Delphi. There, before Apollo himself comes from the temple to direct his suppliant to Athens, the Pythia by her presence and her words anticipates the subsequent scene at Athens and the resolution effected there. The Pythia here is a minor character who has been created by the playwright only so that she may speak the prologue. Though she is defined by her duties to the temple, she is not needed to announce Apollo's will to Orestes; Apollo himself does that. Her presence is incongruous too because her office has its proper place in accounts of the daily operation of the oracle, not in myths where gods may speak directly, as here, with mortals. Yet her words add to the realism of the setting, as she locates the temple in her prayer among the sacred shrines and landscape of Delphi by invoking deities who are worshipped at Delphi (21-29). Through the Pythia Aeschylus blurs the distinction between the mythic locus and the contemporary Delphic institution, anticipating in this his treatment of the Court of the Areopagos later in the play.

The most significant function of the speech of the Delphic Pythia has often been noted. She begins by giving the history of the oracle, outlining the peaceful transfer of power from god to god, starting with primal Gaia and ending with Apollo (1-20). Hers is an orderly account that contrasts markedly with the well-known story of Apollo's forcible seizure of power from Python.[20] Aeschylus has substituted for the earlier, violent account of the oracle's history his own version emphasizing the peaceful yielding of older gods to younger, in order to provide both a precedent for the yielding of the Furies to Athene and Apollo at the end of this play, and a paradigm for the acceptance of the controversial reforms of the Court of the Areopagus that Aeschylus advocates here. Aeschylus has used the setting at Delphi to prepare for the judgement at Athens, effecting a smooth transition between the

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20 *Hymn to Pythian Apollo,* esp. 355ff. Simonides apparently told a version of the story of Apollo's violent conquest (fr. 68 *PMG,* Page), as does Euripides (*IT* 1239-1251). See Joseph Fontenrose 1959: 13-27 and references there.

highly traditional story with which the trilogy began and Aeschylus' innovative conclusion to this work.

Sophocles' *Electra*

We have already seen how the naming of Argos and of Orestes at the beginning of Sophocles' *Electra* serves to identify the traditional basis of the story being dramatized. But the way the speech functions as an introduction to Sophocles' play goes beyond this.[21] Sophocles uses the contracting spatial focus of the Paedagogus' speech, from the land of Argos (4), to the city Mycenae (9) and finally to the house of Pelops (10),[22] to mark the corresponding shift of focus in his drama from the political and dynastic concerns of Orestes, found in Homer and Aeschylus, to his own interest in Electra and the consequences for her of vengeance too long awaited.[23]

Leading Orestes back from exile, the Paedagogus, after the formal address to the "Child of Agamemnon," begins by surveying the region and identifying landmarks and monuments of its greatness:[24]

> τὸ γὰρ παλαιὸν Ἄργος οὑπόθεις τόδε,
> τῆς οἰστροπλῆγος ἄλσος Ἰνάχου κόρης·
> αὕτη δ', Ὀρέστα, τοῦ λυκοκτόνου θεοῦ
> ἀγορὰ Λύκειος· οὑξ ἀριστερᾶς δ' ὅδε
> Ἥρας ὁ κλεινὸς ναός· οἷ δ' ἱκάνομεν,
> φάσκειν Μυκήνας τὰς πολυχρύσους ὁρᾶν,
> πολύφθορόν τε δῶμα Πελοπιδῶν τόδε
>
> This is ancient Argos, for which you longed:
> the grove of Inachus' gadfly-stung daughter,
> and here, Orestes, the Wolf forum,
> dedicated to the wolf-slaying god,
> and here on the left, the famous temple of Hera,

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21 A. J. A. Waldock 1966: 170 summarizes the effect of the prologue as a whole.

22 Jebb 1894: *ad* 4-8 and Kamerbeek 1974: 21 would have these opening lines delivered as the men stand before the *skene*/palace looking out over the auditorium/plain of Argolis. But if the lines are delivered as the men approach the palace, it would give better visual sense to the drawing inward of focus in the description; so Kells 1973: 79, though without this explanation.

23 Segal 1981: 250-1; Thomas Woodard 1965: 196-7 suggests a correlated temporal movement in the speech in which "Everything leads us to the present movement;" Linforth 1962: 89-90 discusses the prominence of Electra in Sophocles' play.

24 Kaibel 68; Jebb 1894: *ad* 4-8; Kamerbeek 1974: 20-2; Kells 1973: 79.

and this place to which we come –
there you may say that you see Mycenae, rich in gold
and there, the house of the Pelopidae, rich in slaughter.
(4-10)

The catalogue of monuments, which traces the exile's approach to his city, reinforces our sense of the pathos of exile, but it also anticipates the political implications of the deed Orestes returns to accomplish.[25] With these opening lines the audience, together with Orestes, is invited to survey the historical greatness of Argos and its close connection to the gods. But the broadly political and dynastic concerns implicit in this survey of the kingdom Orestes has come to claim narrow abruptly in the last line as the exile's inheritance is shown to include also the "slaughter-rich" house of Pelops.[26] Orestes is introduced to his patrimony gradually, through his progress past monuments testifying to its magnificence, but in the end he comes to the bloody history of this house which he now joins.

Orestes approaches the city moved by a political goal expressed in the play's opening words and inherent in the traditional story.[27] But when he has laid the plans for accomplishing the vengeance and leaves to set the plan in motion, Electra emerges from the palace to dominate the action until her longed-for vengeance is accomplished. Her movement from within the palace answers Orestes' movement toward it. And like Orestes she looks to the avenging of Agamemnon in all that she says, but her words reinterpret Orestes' return, directing attention away from the political rewards he seeks in the deed to all that she has suffered in waiting for its accomplishment, and will have lost despite it.[28]

The paedagogus' opening words that introduce Orestes to his kingdom locate this extremely inwardly-focused tragedy in a larger context of politics and tradition. Orestes' arrival at Mycenae, the youth intent on vengeance, and his eventual taking of that vengeance provide a frame for the central matter of the tragedy. And the movement of Orestes from outside the city to the palace

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[25] Sale 1973: 85, Woodward 1964: 165-6. Whitman 1951: 155 suggests that the Paedagogus "is a visual symbol of the young hero's *paideia*, his training for greatness."

[26] Kells 1973: *ad* 10; Kamerbeek 1974: *ad* 10 notes the force of the chiasmus. See also Easterling 1987: 19-21.

[27] See Bernard Knox's discussion 1982: 7-10 of this passage.

[28] Dale 1969a: 225.

of his ancestors mirrors the movement of the play's focus, effecting a transition from the traditional story to the poet's own telling of it.

Euripides' *Electra*

Setting contributes to the introduction of Euripides' *Electra* in a somewhat more obvious way, perhaps because the poet has marked his radical treatment of this story by a change of setting. He has transferred the dramatic action from before the palace of Agamemnon, the scene of the *Choephoroe* of Aeschylus, a place readily suggested by the story and a typical setting for tragedy, to a poor man's home, and has shifted the focus correspondingly from the grandeur of a dynastic struggle to the pettiness of family infighting. The grand apostrophe of noble Argos, discussed above, with which the prologue begins, then, is less intended to provide a transition than a measure of the distance between the traditional story and Euripides' reworking of it.[29]

The naming of Argos at the beginning of Euripides' *Electra* also serves the practical function of justifying the introduction of background information relevant to the drama. This is an obvious and common use of setting.[30] Something as simple as Apollo's identification of Admetus' house in the *Alcestis* allows the playwright to introduce the complex connection between Apollo and Admetus that gives rise to the extraordinary situation at the man's home when the play begins.[31] Identifying the setting does not provide the necessary information; it merely provides a sufficient justification for the introduction of this information. In the *Bacchae*, too, Euripides exploits this potential of setting, making Dionysus' opening monologue motivated in large part by his surroundings. Identifying himself and Thebes, the god notes his connection with the city through his mother, Semele. Then, seeing the monument erected to her,[32] he is brought to explain its history, which in turn leads him to explain his own reason for coming to Thebes. The setting motivates the explanations contained in the

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29 Knox 1982: 9.

30 Variations on this function of setting are found in the *Agamemnon*, the *Prometheus Bound*, the *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Philoctetes*, as well as in the plays of Euripides mentioned here.

31 Dale 1954: *ad* 1.

32 Dodds 1960: *ad* 1, on the form of these opening lines.

god's monologue which serve to anticipate the events that follow.[33]

Anticipation of Character and Theme

The two last extant plays of Sophocles make particularly extensive use of setting to introduce action, character, and theme. For each, the importance of setting extends far beyond its functional value in introducing the play's starting point in tradition. In the *Philoctetes*, the function of setting begins with the identification of the geographic locale, but then exploration of the locale is further used as the means of introducing the protagonist and his situation. Sophocles' last extant play, the *Oedipus at Colonus*, seems to have no traditional story at its base;[34] yet the poet has nevertheless found in setting the means of anticipating for the audience the events that he dramatizes.

The *Philoctetes*

This play offers perhaps the clearest example of the extended use of setting to introduce tragic characters. Sophocles, following the tradition going back to Homer, locates the story on the island of Lemnos.[35] Philoctetes, abandoned there by the Greek forces heading for Troy because of a wound that made his company unbearable, has the one thing that will assure the Greek success against Troy, the bow of Herakles. For this weapon, some ten years later, the Greeks send Odysseus, who is the one who had first marooned him, to retrieve the man and his bow. The difficulty lies in persuading Philoctetes to give his help to those who abandoned him in his much greater need. Using this tradition and the traditional setting, Sophocles has nevertheless changed it by creating for his play a Lemnos that is uninhabited. Unprecedented in the literary tradition, this change also contradicts the reality of contemporary, inhabited Lemnos.[36] By deliberately clearing Lemnos

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[33] Segal 1982: 81-3 devotes an extensive discussion to the point.

[34] But see Lowell Edmunds 1981: 222, n.6, who suggests that Androtion's account of Oedipus' history (quoted in a scholium on Hom. *Od.* 11.271 = FGrH 324F62) uses sources external to Sophocles' plays.

[35] Homer, *Iliad* 2.716-25; Philoctetes is also mentioned, though without reference to Lemnos, at *Odyssey* 3.190, 8.219-20; for further references see Kamerbeek 1980: 1-6.

[36] Both Aeschylus and Euripides had composed plays on this subject before Sophocles. It is not known when Aeschylus' work was presented;

of people, Sophocles isolates Philoctetes and shifts the focus of his suffering from the physical discomfort of his ulcerous foot to the consequence of this injury, his exile from civilization.[37]

The man and all he has suffered embodies Sophocles' theme: he, and consequently the theme, first become known through the descriptions of the cave that is his home on the island.[38] The cave and its contents are explored by the Greek landing party and are described in three separate speeches at the beginning of the play. Each speech provides new details about the manner of Philoctetes' life on Lemnos and, somewhat incidentally, about the men who have come at last to free him, or at least his bow, from exile.[39] While each speech must be evaluated within its own dramatic context, together they provide an example of how Sophocles has used details of setting to introduce characters and even themes into his work.[40]

Sophocles begins the play with lines that identify the dramatic locale and emphatically describe it as uninhabited:

> Ἀκτὴ μὲν ἥδε τῆς περιρρύτου χθονὸς
> Λήμνου, βροτοῖς ἄστιπτος οὐδ' οἰκουμένη
>
> This is the shore of the island Lemnos,
> a place neither trodden nor inhabited by mortals
> (1-2)

Odysseus, who gives this opening speech, moves quickly into an apologetic account of his marooning of Philoctetes on the island ten years earlier and, having made this preface, turns to the business at hand. He directs Neoptolemus to climb about the place and find Philoctetes' cave-home; he can describe it for him presumably by drawing on his memory of the island from his trip there ten years earlier:

> σκοπεῖν θ' ὅπου 'στ' ἐνταῦθα δίστομος πέτρα
> τοιάδ', ἵν' ἐν ψύχει μὲν ἡλίου διπλῆ

Euripides' appeared with the *Medea* in 431. Accounts of these plays are preserved by Dio of Prusa, who wrote a comparative essay on the three (*Or.* 52) and a summary of the prologue of Euripides' *Philoctetes* (*Or.* 59).

37 Segal 1981: 303-5, 322-6.

38 Segal 1981: 295.

39 Linforth 1956: 100-5, wrongly, I think, finds Philoctetes of far less importance in the prologue than his bow.

40 Robinson 1969: 36 sees a far more limited purpose to this introductory scene. Jens-Uwe Schmidt 1973: 24-5 discusses the responses to the cave.

πάρεστιν ἐνθάκησις, ἐν θέρει δ' ὕπνον
δι' ἀμφιτρῆτος αὐλίου πέμπει πνοή.

See where there is a two-mouthed rock
of such a kind that in cold weather there is a double seat
in the sun and in hot weather a breeze sends sleep through
the double-drilled dwelling (16-19)

This description, combined with Neoptolemus' presumed stage actions in finding the "cave," serve the dramaturgic function of defining the acting area imaginatively within the play's context.[41] It also provides the audience with its first indication of Philoctetes' life on the island and creates the expectation, which grows throughout the prologue and parados, of the arrival of the man himself.[42]

The description of the cave-home is peculiar in a number of ways.[43] Remarkably impersonal, it is void of any reference to Philoctetes or his peculiar circumstances, his wounded foot and limited resources, which make the sight of his dwelling particularly evocative, for others, of his hardships. In physical details the description is accurate enough to enable Neoptolemus to find and identify the cave, but the descriptive details are misleadingly optimistic. In Odysseus' description, the cave's occupant is warmed by the sun in the winter and cooled in the summer by breezes. Odysseus certainly intends that Philoctetes be identified with the shadowy figure implied both in the description of the cave's ledges as ἐνθάκησις (18) and by the mention of sleep brought by the breezes of summer. It is a misleading introduction. Philoctetes himself later tells of lying in his cave and suffering from, not enjoying the summer's heat and the winter's cold (1082). The pleasures of the cave suggested here by Odysseus bear no relation to Philoctetes' life on Lemnos; the implied comparison of this shadowy figure who suns himself at the cave's mouth with

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41 The scenic arrangement has troubled a number of scholars who debate, primarily, whether both openings to the cave (δίστομος πέτρα 16), or merely one are shown. Arguing for one door is Woodhouse1912: 239ff. and Dale 1969c:127-9. Linforth 1956: 97, n.2 refutes Woodhouse, as does Robinson 1969: 33-6, though more gently. Webster 1970: 8 and Kamerbeek 1980: 9-10 follow Dale in assuming one opening only was represented visually to the audience of the original performance.

42 See above, note 1.

43 Webster 1970: *ad* 16 remarks, "Odysseus describes the cave like a house-agent, implying that its desirability mitigated his cruelty."

Philoctetes who struggles daily to survive yields nothing but a startling contrast.[44]

Odysseus has an obvious reason to describe the cave so pleasantly and, apparently, inaccurately. He speaks here to Neoptolemus, trying both to convince and to equip him to participate in the deception plotted against Philoctetes. It is not in his interest to be fully honest with the younger man about the hardships Philoctetes has suffered or about his own part in imposing them. He does best to leave much out of his account and to gloss over other details.

Yet functionally, while he is in the act of addressing Neoptolemus, he delivers the play's introduction. This speech reflects a conflict between the two separate requirements of the introductory speech: the poet must provide his audience with background information and he would like to do so through a character who has an active part and a personal stake in the drama. The conflict is partially resolved by having Odysseus speak rather vaguely or not at all about Philoctetes' situation on the island, and by using his innocent companion Neoptolemus to describe the situation in greater detail.

When Neoptolemus, on Odysseus' orders, searches for and discovers Philoctetes' cave-home, his description of its contents has none of the idealization that marks Odysseus' speech. These findings in the cave are the first solid evidence for Philoctetes' existence. They are described by Neoptolemus in stichomythia with Odysseus:

Οδ. οὐδ' ἔνδον οἰκοποιός ἐστί τις τροφή;
Νε. στιπτή γε φυλλὰς ὡς ἐναυλίζοντί τωι.
Οδ. τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἐρῆμα, κοὐδέν ἐσθ' ὑπόστεγον;
Νε. αὐτόξυλόν γ' ἔκπωμα, φλαυρουργοῦ τινος
τεχνήματ' ἀνδρός, καὶ πυρεῖ' ὁμοῦ τάδε.
Οδ. κείνου τὸ θησαύρισμα σημαίνεις τόδε.
Νε. ἰοὺ ιοὺ· καὶ ταῦτά γ' ἄλλα θάλπεται
ῥάκη, βαρείας του νοσηλείας πλέα.
Οδ. ἀνὴρ κατοικεῖ τούσδε τοὺς τόπους σαφῶς,
κἄστ' οὐκ ἑκάς που.

Od. Is there not within any comforts which mark the place as home?
Ne. Only leaves pressed down as though by someone sleeping.
Od. And as for the rest it is empty, and there is nothing under the roof?

[44] Segal 1981: 324.

Ne. Only a wooden cup hand-made, a piece worked by some sorry workman.
Od. It is his treasure you describe.
Ne. Look, there are also rags warming, full of someone's cruel ooze.
Od. The man clearly lives in this place, and he is not far away, I'd guess. (32-41)

The contents of the cave described here are never seen by the audience; they are present only in the words of Neoptolemus. The primary purpose of the description is to add to the growing, verbally created image of Philoctetes, who remains absent from the acting area. The crude furnishing of his home vividly indicate his minimal existence on Lemnos and must elicit sympathy from all but the hardest of hearts—or those under their influence. But the harshness of life on the island that is implicit in this description is noticeably ignored by both Neoptolemus and Odysseus.

The unfeeling older man compounds the impression of insensitivity he has already given in his self-exculpatory introductory speech by referring to the cave's meagre contents as a 'treasure' (θησαύρισμα, 37), and from them deducing about Philoctetes only that he lives and not how he lives. In his vagueness of description, a seeming reluctance to draw conclusions from what he sees (it is not "a bed of leaves," but "leaves pressed down as though by someone sleeping"), Neoptolemus also ignores the implications of the cave's contents.[45] But the audience cannot. Sophocles has chosen the contents of the cave so that Philoctetes will win the audience's sympathy, and arranged the cave's description so that Odysseus and his companion are seen as devoid of sympathy.

Neoptolemus' refusal to recognize Philoctetes' suffering becomes more obvious in his exchange with his men as they enter the acting area with the parados.[46] In fear of the island's unknown inhabitant they approach their leader to learn more of their adversary. Neoptolemus answers their queries by referring them to the cave. They are clearly directed to learn of the unknown adversary by examining his home. Fear is quickly replaced by a sorrowing empathy as they examine the man's cave-home and

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[45] T. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1917: 278-89.

[46] Linforth 1956: 106 notes that the role of the chorus in the parados is to introduce pity for Philoctetes.

its contents (135-218). The men see just what Neoptolemus has examined and share his knowledge of Philoctetes' lameness, but unlike Odysseus or Neoptolemus they respond to this information by creating a picture of Philoctetes' sufferings so vivid that they seem to participate in it themselves. But the sufferings they imagine, though deduced from what they see in the cave, are not directly tied to the physical evidence. The men do not sympathetically lament the rudeness of the cave or the necessity of sleeping on leaves, or any other hardship directly suggested by the artifacts before them. Rather, making an imaginative leap from what they see,[47] they recognize loneliness and isolation from civilization as Philoctetes' greatest hardships, and their lyric laments of these hardships rise in pitch until they are broken off as the man they have pictured so vividly is heard approaching and finally appears.

His appearance is the culmination of the elaborate introduction given him through the descriptions of the physical context in which he had lived for ten years. And his words confirm what the chorus had deduced: his physical suffering, though great, is far less than the pain due to his isolation from his fellow Greeks. His profound desire to rejoin society, revealed here in his effusive greeting to Neoptolemus and his men, gives the measure of his later refusal to go to Troy and win glory and release from his disease. And it marks Sophocles' emphatic assertion of a commonplace, that man's existence outside his proper setting in society is, necessarily, a much diminished existence. This and its converse, the necessary participation of an individual in his society, gains further expression in the events that follow in the play. But here, at the beginning, Sophocles has established the conflict and defined the main characters, and he has done so in large measure by exploiting the expressive potential of dramatic setting.

The *Oedipus at Colonus*

The complex and pervasive use of described setting to define action, character, and theme, apparent in the Philoctetes, will reappear in Sophocles' final extant work. In no tragedy does setting

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[47] This process of deducing abstract qualities from physical objects is precisely what the poets depend on in using narrative setting suggestively.

have a more pervasive importance than in the *Oedipus at Colonus.*[48] Sophocles has created an original story that joins cult and myth by bringing the Oedipus of the mythic tradition to end his life in the place where he is worshipped as a hero.[49] The locale of the dramatic action is of obvious importance to this play in which the power of an exile to bless the land of his refuge is the central issue of the drama. In the play's beginning Sophocles lends the locale of the tragedy special emphasis by making it look towards and initiate, through the oracle Oedipus possesses, all subsequent action in the play.

The opening speech, delivered by Oedipus as he and Antigone enter the acting area, follows the common pattern of introductory speeches in identifying the main characters. But then, instead of positively identifying the place as is usual in tragedy, Oedipus poses this as a question to Antigone.[50] He does not get the answer to his question immediately, and his desire to learn the identity of the place, together with his response to this information when he does learn it, dominates the play's prologue.

Antigone begins the gradual identification of the play's location by telling Oedipus that they are within sight of Athens. She, however, does not know the identity of the place where they have stopped for rest, but replaces identification with a description of singular beauty (16-18). Oedipus must wait until a citizen of the place comes to them before he gets the specific information he seeks. The citizen's identification of the grove as belonging to the Eumenides produces a startling response in Oedipus. Whereas before he sought merely a place to rest for a moment in his wanderings, now he declares himself a suppliant to these goddesses and says that he will never leave the grove (44-5).[51] Oedipus seems satisfied, indeed, exhilarated, by what he has learned, but his reaction remains unexplained until the stranger departs and Oedipus addresses the dread goddesses in prayer. In his prayer he recounts an oracle he received some years back from Apollo,

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48 It has, nevertheless, received relatively little attention from scholars, but see Winnington-Ingram 1980: 248-79 and Appendix E, pp. 339-40, Allison 1984: 67-91.

49 Reinhardt 1979: 193-4.

50 See Allison 1984: 70. Oedipus' requests for information are naturally motivated by his blindness.

51 Allison 1984: 72, Winnington-Ingram 1954: 18, Gellie 1972: 160, Knox 1964: 148-50.

which promises that when he finds rest and hospitality in a grove of the Eumenides he will end his wandering exile and bring good to those among whom he dwells (84-110). The identification of the grove is the recognition sign of the oracle's fufillment. And the enunciation of this oracle is the culmination of the prologue, looking toward the subsequent events and, more immediately, making clear how important Athens' decision to accept or reject this suppliant is for its own well-being.[52]

Sophocles has used the oracle to replace tradition in forming the expectations of his audience for the events to come in the drama. Hearing what is declared by the oracle and confirmed by Oedipus' place in the grove of the Eumenides, the audience possesses that privileged knowledge of the future they regularly derive from the traditional stories.[53] And yet, there remains a difference between the two as sources of knowledge for the audience, and it is a difference that the playwright recognizes and exploits.

When a tragedy has as its basis a traditional story, the tragedian may simply evoke the tradition in his introduction and the audience is given knowledge of at least the broad outlines of what is to follow — given knowledge, in most cases, of the essential outcome of the drama. This information, by the conventions of Greek tragedy, is privileged, unavailable to the characters in the drama. The traditional stories remain outside the work, as a tool for the artist, as a source of knowledge, more or less accurate, for the audience. But an oracle is an element of plot, a source of knowledge for the drama's characters as well as for the audience. Here the oracle anticipates, as knowledge of the tradition in other plays does, the events that will follow, but it alters and shapes those events as well.[54]

Oedipus alone has knowledge of the oracle until he chooses to share it with Antigone and the audience. He alone possesses this

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[52] Kamerbeek 1982: 6, Seale 1982: 113-6.

[53] David Seale 1972: 94-102 discusses the poet's reliance on the ignorance of the audience in the *Philoctetes* (see especially 97 and note that he begins the article by discussing the similarities between the *Philoctetes* and the *OC*). This "element of surprise" as a dramatic technique is briefly discussed by Robinson 1969: 44. See also Webster 1936: 22-3, who, however, errs in summarily judging the place of oracles in Sophoclean theology.

[54] Hamilton 1978: 288-9, *passim* calls attention to this function of oracles for Euripides.

privileged knowledge of the future. The usual advantage of the audience, their knowledge of the tradition on which a drama is based and thus effectively, their knowledge of the future, is denied them initially by Sophocles. And they are forced to share with Antigone and the chorus mystification at Oedipus' response. When the locale is identified, they are no more enlightened than they ever were of the outcome of the tragedy. Only Oedipus recognizes the implications of the place; only he derives from its identification a confident knowledge of the future. Just as the audience here must depend on him for knowledge of what is to follow, so too later must Theseus depend on him to lead the way to the place of his heroization. His peculiar knowledge of the future here in the play's prologue is the first intimation of the gradual transformation throughout the play of this blind and defiled old man seeking asylum into a hero capable of protecting Athens against her enemies.[55] And it is a knowledge that is intimately tied to the locale of the drama, both in its revelation and in its consummation.

[55] Peter Burian 1974: 410 remarks, "The central paradox of the play is that the suppliant is destined to be the saviour."

CHAPTER TWO

NARRATIVE SETTING AND EURIPIDES' *ION*

Setting may be used most often to introduce the traditional tales of tragedy and, more obliquely, the poets' interest in them, but in some few extant plays spatial definition is central to and inseparable from the poet's construction of his meaning in the whole of the tragedy. In the final two plays of Sophocles, discussed in the previous chapter and subsequently in Chapter Six,[1] the physical context of the dramatic action is used to define evocatively the character and situation of the protagonist not only at the plays' beginnings but throughout. The same might be said of the harsh environment of Prometheus' punishment in the *Prometheus Bound*, or of Thetis' shrine in the *Andromache*, or of Thebes and Mt. Cithaeron in the *Bacchae*.[2] In these tragedies, in different ways, the verbal definition of setting is extensive and crucial to the meaningful structure of the tragedy and must be evaluated as part of a larger reading of the tragedy as both a verbal and a performative text. In order to explore some of the extensive and diverse uses of setting in tragedy, I focus in this chapter on a single play, Euripides' *Ion*, in which the significance of setting for the thematic development of the play includes but extends beyond the introductory naming either of Delphi, the play's geographic locale, or of Athens, which provides a larger context to the events at Delphi enacted in the play. Examination of the ways in which setting is used in this drama will allow fuller detailing of the expressive capacity of setting as a device of drama and provide a useful introduction to the discussions that follow of cult settings in supplication scenes, discussed in Chapter Three, and of the character-defining antinomy of home and not-home discussed in Part Two.

This complex drama of recognition, in which Ion, who is to be the father of the Ionian race, discovers that Apollo is his own

[1] Above, pages 29 ff. and below, pages 133 ff.

[2] Spatial definition in these plays is discussed below: *Prometheus Bound*, pages 195 ff.; *Andromache*, pages 98 ff.; *Bacchae*, pages 153-6.

father, is drawn from the traditional stories of Athens[3] and tied to contemporary Athenian political aspirations, and yet Euripides has located the enacted events outside of Athens before Apollo's temple at Delphi.[4] In shifting Ion's story away from Athens to Delphi and making events there always look back to Athens, Euripides invites a more detached consideration of this city which visibly defines the context of the tragic performance and, to a significant extent, the identity of its audience. But the playwright

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[3] The story of Ion treated here is an expression of the connection, reinforced by a shared dialect, that was felt to exist between Athens and Ionia (A. J. Graham 1983: 11, 216). Having no part in the pan-Hellenic mythology, Ion's story evidently arises late, for he is absent from the traditional king-lists of early Athens. He takes his existence from Ionia, as the eponymous hero of that place and in many accounts its founder (Wilamowitz 1926: 1-10, Grégoire, 1965: 155-8, Owen 1939: ix-xvii, Conacher 1967: 270-3). He is made a member of the Athenian royal house as the son of Creusa, daughter of Erechtheus; the identity of his father is ambiguous in the tradition and, of course, the question the drama seeks to solve. Our only source before the fifth century identifies Ion as the son of Xuthus, in the tradition, the foreign husband of Creusa (*Catalogue*, fr. 9, Merklebach and West 1967; see Owen 1939: x-xi.). Subsequent writers offer conflicting evidence: Herodotus, Apollodorus, Pausanias, and Strabo all name Xuthus as his father, but Plato and Arrian contend, and others seem to imply, that he is the son of Apollo (Xuthus: Herodotus 7.94, 8.44; Apollodorus I 7.3; Pausanias I 31.3, II 14.2, VII 1.2; Strabo 8.7.1. Apollo: Plato *Euthyd.* 302d; Arrian. *Anab.* 7.29; for further discussion and references see Owen 1939: xiii-xvi.). In establishing Apollo as the father of Ion, Euripides is exploiting and combining two separate traditions. By providing Ion with a divine father, he elevates the traditional founder of Ionia to status as a hero, and in doing so, enhances the status of Ionia. And by locating at Apollo's oracle at Delphi Ion's discovery of this fact and the prediction that he shall father the founders of Ionia, he is exploiting the tradition and real practice of colonists who would seek sanction for their colonizing efforts at Apollo's oracle (Parke and Wormell 1956: 53-4, Graham 1983: 25-8). Delphi provides a connection for this drama to the real role of the oracle in Greek colonization and to the god who is made responsible for the events.

[4] Because the Delphic setting so clearly influences the shape and meaning of the *Ion*, scholars have long tried to discover whether the choice of setting is an innovation of Euripides. Some have assumed that Sophocles in the *Creusa*, which is thought to have treated the same story, was the first to set the story at Delphi (See Conacher 1967: 271, n. 12 and references there.). The fragments assigned to the earlier work, however, offer no evidence for the locale of the drama (Fr. 350-59, Radt; these are discussed also by Sutton 1984: 33-5). Dalmeyda 1914: 43-50 finds in the play itself evidence that Sophocles' play was set at Athens; see also Burnett 1971: 103 and n. 4.). Colardeau 1908: 430-4 answers Dalmeyda. In the absence of evidence this debate must remain without sure conclusion, but what is clear is that the story of Ion belongs at Athens and the decision to move his story to Delphi is a radical one that is critical to Euripides' treatment of the story (Burnett 1971: 103-5 and Whitman 1974: 71f.).

also finds in the spatial opposition of Delphi and Athens a powerful expression of the logical opposition between a rationalist and a mythic world-view that dominates this tragedy. Delphi, the dramatic setting, is defined by Apollo's temple and by the business of that temple, by its priestess and attendants, by the tourists and applicants that come to it. In this way it is made to be the Delphi of Euripides' audience, a city realistically defined and located by its function in the contemporary world. But Athens, the real context for the tragic performance, becomes in the fiction of the tragedy the distant locus of fantastic mythic happenings. It is a place where Athena, like Apollo, is careful to preserve a child who will be father of his race; where Erechtheus, Creusa's father, may be slain by a god (281-2); and where a girl may meet a god and have his child. These legends of Athens' heroic past mark the distance separating Athens in this play from the realistically defined Delphi. And yet, although Delphi may be opposed to Athens in the shaping Euripides has given these places in the *Ion*, in the end what is of importance is the continuum joining the two places, which allows Creusa and finally Ion to move from one place to occupy the other.[5]

The familiar tale of the birth of a hero from the union of a god and a mortal woman, which Euripides has adopted for the *Ion*, offers a pattern ideal for the defense of myth central to this play.[6] In its expression of patriotic sentiments through myth it contains

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[5] The *Ion* has for some time been something of a puzzle to critics. Oddly enough, the division of scholarly opinions correspond broadly to the spatial opposition of Delphi and Athens in the play. By some it has been seen as a play with Delphi and the Delphic god at its center. A. W. Verrall 1890 perhaps best represents those who argue that Euripides has shaped this tale in such a way as to debunk Apollo in particular and the Olympian gods more generally. Equally concerned with Apollo and his oracle, though offering a decidedly more pious interpretation, is Anne Burnett 1971: 101-29, who argues that the *Ion* is a demonstration of the god's mercy against the doubts of his worshippers. Despite the differences dividing these critics, they are united in seeing the focus of the play on Delphi and on Apollo. Criticism of the play more recently, however, has turned from Delphi to Athens. Following the trend in Euripidean and in tragic studies more generally to locate this genre in its political context in democratic Athens, consideration of the political, patriotic themes in the *Ion* has replaced the essentially theological focus of earlier interpretations. Two recent studies in particular have located the poet's concern in the politically charged issue of autochthony, making Athenian self-identity central to the play's meaning (Saxonhouse 1986: 252-273, Loraux 1990: 168-206.).

[6] Burnett 1970: 5-6 ennumerates these stories.

within it a double possibility: the glorification of the city through myth or the discrediting of myth with its implied discrediting of Athenian claims to Ionia. In the peculiar shape Euripides has given to this traditional pattern myth is compellingly tied to national pride. The heroic founder of the race of Ionia is born from the union of Apollo with Creusa, and the tragedy, maintaining this divine-mortal union as its background, enacts the adolescent crisis of identity in which Ion must discover his own parentage and recognize his inherent heroism as a preface to heroic action.[7] But Euripides has complicated the traditional pattern — and the politics — of the play by making the happy drama of the youth's recognition of his identity contrast harshly with the violence of that necessary prior event, the god's union with Creusa.[8] This focus on what Creusa suffered as a preface to Ion's — and Athens' — greatness seems to condemn Apollo and recalls rationalistic critiques of myth that condemned the immorality of accounts of gods' rapes of mortal women.[9] Ion himself will initially echo these critiques when he is confronted with Creusa's account of Apollo's treatment of her "friend" (338). But in this play the critique of myth will be refuted by Ion himself, whose own identity derives from the union he condemns. Ion, like Euripides' Athenian audience, is compelled in the course of the drama to accept the impossible truth of myth or to deny his own — and his city's — greatness. Euripides deliberately creates a tension between what Creusa suffered in the Long Caves at Athens and Ion's happy discovery of his heroism at Delphi to problematize myth, but the play's resolution is made to depend upon the

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[7] As in the tale of Telemachus known from the *Odyssey*, or that of Neoptolemus in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* (on this last, see Vidal-Naquet 1990: 161-80).

[8] The uniqueness of Euripides' treatment of the story pattern is apparent in the poet's decision to bring Creusa to Delphi to confront the god at his temple with what she suffered from him years before in the Long Caves at Athens. In stories like Creusa's, in which a god rapes a mortal woman and engenders a hero, the god's temple has no place; certainly, the wronged woman does not come to the god's temple to reproach the god. These stories are located wholly in the landscape of myth where human beings encounter the gods directly — hence the possibility of relations between gods and mortals that give rise to heroes. It is in the world of normal human experience that human beings approach the gods throught their temples and hear the gods speak through signs and oracles.

[9] As in Xenophanes' condemnation of Homer and Hesiod for attributing to the gods adultery, *inter alia* (Fragment 166 in Kirk Raven and Schofield 1983: 168).

close connection of these two tales and their place in the continuous line of Athenian heroic greatness.

The balancing of these two tales, like the spatial division between Athens and Delphi, is another example of the doubling characteristic of the *Ion*. The poet's strategy throughout has been to create an impossibly double narrative. In the course of the play Ion, an orphan at the play's beginning, will acquire from the god's oracle one somewhat less than ideal father in Xuthus, the interloper king of Athens, and then will be told by Athena appearing *ex machina* that his father is, in fact, Apollo, the god he has served all his life. This impossible abundance of fathers is characteristic of stories that seek to substantiate a hero's claim to birth from a god and a mortal woman. There is always a suspicion whether the father might not be merely a mortal too, and the god's participation an imaginary creation of a woman wishing to explain her illegitimate child. The mother in such stories is unquestionably identified; the ambiguity, crucial to the child's larger identity, surrounds the father of the child.[10] In the *Ion* the over-abundance of fathers is at the center of the drama of recognition and used to define the poet's defense of myth against rationalist disbelief. Ion, the bearer of Athenian claims to Ionia, may be viewed as the son of a god, a noble expression of Athenian greatness, or may instead be seen as a bastard lacking any connection to Athens. Ion the bastard is the product of a rationalist world view; his existence is reasonable and sordid. His father is an interloper at Athens and his mother only a matter of speculation (550 ff.); the youth, given these antecedents, will face a difficult life at Athens, as he himself recognizes (585-647). But if he is the son of a god, the product of the wholly unbelievable intrusion of a god into the affairs of humans, he may find in

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[10] Such a crisis of paternity will bring Dionysus to Thebes to destroy his mother's family, who refused to believe in the divinity of his father and chose instead to think that his mother was promiscuous and he a bastard. The doubling of divine and human fathers is perhaps clearest in the story of Heracles, son of Alcmene, who was visited in the same night by Zeus disguised as her husband and also by her husband himself. In most accounts the issue of that night is double: both the immortal Heracles and his mortal brother Iphicles are produced, each the evident product of his own father. Euripides, in his *Heracles*, however, resolves the ambiguity differently, using the tradition of Heracles' dual paternity to express the separate divine and human elements in the hero's own nature (Gregory 1977: 260-1).

himself a glorious nobility, a secure place at Athens, and a destiny that will glorify himself and his newly discovered home. It is this last possibility that Athena ultimately, and the play, will confirm, and assert besides the ennobling power of myth in the world of humans. But before that happy outcome, Euripides treats us to the spectacle of human reason confronting the world of the gods, as he forces Ion — and his audience — to resolve the conflicting possibilities of the youth's identity.

The crisis of identity is played out in the doubling of fathers; the doubling of cities plays a different role in the *Ion*. Unlike the Homeric hero's double identification by his father's name and his city's, there is no correspondence here between father and city in defining the youth: Ion, it seems, must leave his youthful refuge at Delphi and go to Athens whether he goes as Xuthus' son or as Apollo's. Certainly, Athens will receive him differently in either case. As Xuthus' son he will face a city full of hostile political intrigue, a place of danger, a place in which he will never be at home. But if he goes as the son of Apollo and the city's queen, he goes to claim his rightful place in his native city and to join the line of his noble forebears. Delphi and Athens in the drama do not explicitly define Ion's identity, or his choice to believe that Xuthus or Apollo is his father. Instead, through the opposition of Delphi and Athens Euripides gives vivid shape to the opposition between Xuthus and Apollo, between the tangibly real and the mythic —and to what connects them.

The two cities are distinguished initially in the definition they are given in the tragic performance. Athens is the unseen goal of the tragic action; Delphi is the place given a vivid reality in enactment. And in the spatial details he gives it Euripides has taken great pains to make the Delphic setting of the *Ion* a place that recalls the actual Delphi familiar to his audience.[11] Hermes may begin the prologue by describing Delphi as the place where Apollo himself sits and gives prophecies to mortals (6), but it is the Pythia, the human mouthpiece of the god, who finds the baby Ion on the temple steps and assumes a most pedestrian source for the child. For the Pythia, Ion's appearance suggests not the miracle of divine intervention that it will prove to be, but a somewhat sordid

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[11] Homolle 1902: 588-92, Picard and de la Coste-Messelière 1957: 16ff; Rosivach 1977: 284-5.

occurrence: the guilty abandonment of an illegitimate child (41-5). Ion's monody which follows Hermes' account, despite its idealizing fervor, does not obscure the solid reality of the temple of Apollo. He glories in daybreak at the god's temple with such lofty language as:

> ἅρματα μὲν τάδε λαμπρὰ τεθρίππων·
> Ἥλιος ἤδη λάμπει κατὰ γῆν,
> ἄστρα δὲ φεύγει πυρὶ τῷδ' αἰθέρος
> ἐς νύχθ' ἱεράν·
>
> There is the gleaming four-horsed chariot –
> Already Helios illuminates the earth
> and with his flame the stars flee from the heavens
> into holy night. (82-5)

Such language does much to characterize the enthusiastic youth devoted to Apollo; yet this youth nevertheless describes the operations of the temple in commonplace terms:

> θάσσει δὲ γυνὴ τρίποδα ζάθεον
> Δελφίς, ἀείδουσ' Ἕλλησι βοάς,
> ἃς ἂν Ἀπόλλων κελαδήσῃ.
>
> The Woman of Delphi sits upon the sacred tripod,
> chanting oracles to the people,
> whatever Apollo indicates. (91-3)

and outlines the specifics of his own daily duties: sweeping the temple (103ff.), filling the lustral urns (144ff.), and keeping birds from dirtying the god's precinct (154ff.). The youth may dress the mundane chores of the temple in idealizing praise of its god, but the practical requirements of the god's cult nevertheless intrude.[12] And even this fervent idealism is undercut in Ion's attack on the birds, where the uneasy blending of ideal and practical motives has a decidedly comic effect.[13] It is as though in Ion's monody Euripides has made his audience privy to the daily opening of the temple, to the chores that keep the place running and the routine of its operation — practical concerns oddly at variance with the ecstatic language and form of Ion's song.

When the place has been readied by the efforts of Ion and the

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[12] Whitman 1974: 74-6, Barlow 1971: 45-8.

[13] Comic indeed, if Ruck's suggestion 1975: 250 is correct that "the scene was staged with an extra chorus of bird dancers, ... one of whom apparently enters with a bundle of faggots, intending to build its nest on the temple."

temple servants, it becomes, with the entrance of the chorus representing Creusa's Athenian serving women, what it undoubtedly was to many in Euripides' audience: an object of admiration and wonder to tourists. It is uncertain what we are to imagine them as viewing as they approach the entrance to the temple: the temple metopes, perhaps, or the pediment.[14] But what they describe are figures and scenes from familiar myths. There is Herakles with Iolaos killing the hydra, Bellerophon slaying the Chimaera, and, dominating their description, the gigantomachia in which Athena and Dionysus are prominent. The stories are familiar to the viewers; their recognition gives a pleasure, which serves as a substitute of sorts for entering the temple itself (220 ff.).[15] And the temple's ornaments invite the slave-women to compare Apollo's temple favorably with the architecture on which Athens prides itself (184-9). The account of the scenes depicted on Apollo's temple is perhaps the most detailed description of the immediate setting of a drama available in the extant tragedies. And in part, the details of the sculpture, like the chorus' response itself, simply develop in words the realistic presence of the temple structure which dominates the dramatic action.

That is also, in part, the effect of the extensive description given to the tapestries Ion uses to build the enclosure for his birth-feast.[16] The scenes described from the tapestries, like those exclaimed over at Apollo's temple by Creusa's serving women, give a vividness to the structure, which here is present in the drama only in the description of the messenger. Ion creates the enclosure from one tapestry describing the cyclical working of the cosmos with Uranus herding stars, Helios driving his chariot followed by Night, and the constellations (1146-58). And he joins to these scenes others, described more cursorily, which depict battle and the hunt (1158-62). The last tapestry mentioned, in particular,

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[14] More difficult still is how, if at all, the scenes described here were represented on the Attic stage. See Owen 1939: *ad* 180 and Müller 1975: 27-30; I disagree, however, that the described scenes were necessarily visually represented in the theater.

[15] The scrupulous attention to ritual in Ion's opening monody and here, in his response to the chorus' questions, are part of the creation of a realistically sacral environment for the play. The care given to ritual also characterizes Ion and prepares for his shocking willingness to challenge the ritual claims of the suppliant at the play's end (1312-19).

[16] Mastronarde1975: 169, Goff 1988: 42-54.

recalls the temple ornaments with its depiction of the recognizable tale of Cecrops and his daughters (1163-4). Like the stories seen on Apollo's temple, the stories on the tapestries are ornamental, artistic productions, a source of enjoyment, enclosing the crucial action of the drama, but set apart from it.

The physical reality of the tapestries, as opposed to the elaborate scenes depicted on them, is particularly marked in the careful accounting given of each one's provenance. The tapestry depicting the Attic king Cecrops, the messenger specifies, was given to the temple, appropriately, by an Athenian (1164-5); the tapestries depicting scenes of hunting and fighting were the work (or perhaps the possession) of barbarians (1159); and the source of the cosmological tapestry is still more specifically given: it was, we are told, booty taken from the Amazons by Heracles and given to the temple (1144-5). In the messenger's description, the tapestries themselves, as physical commodities produced, owned, and donated, receive nearly as much mention as the scenes depicted on them. Just as the temple of Apollo bears scenes from traditional stories, but is defined realistically in the play by recognizable ritual and the functioning of the Pythia and oracle, so also the tent tapestries are given physical definition in their etiology and use, while they are made to bear elaborate figurative decorations.

Myth seems always, at this fictive Delphi, to be framed and set apart, an object for viewing, for curiosity and admiration. The skill of the craftsman and the pride of the city are present in the viewer's assessment as much as are the stories themselves. These myths enhance by their associations the temple or tapestries they decorate, as too, the play in which they are found. But they are objects for viewing, peripheral to the action. Their distance from the enacted events is measured when the chorus remarks of one of the figures they see on the temple that he is the one "who is contrived in my needle-work" (196-7). Myth at Delphi is a contrivance of art; it ornaments, entertains, but of itself it has no force, no validity.

And yet myth, nevertheless, is made to intrude into the world Ion knows. The cosmological tapestry describes in its decoration an elaborate and highly figurative representation of the every-day cycle of sun, moon and constellations, but the tapestry itself, the physical object, is an artifact belonging to myth, to the tale of Heracles' conquest of the Amazons (1144-5). The familiar story of

Heracles' battle with the Amazons does not ornament the tapestry, as Heracles' defeat of the Hydra adorns the temple of Apollo;[17] instead it is given presence in Ion's world through this physical object. The tapestry establishes by implication a continuity between Ion's world and Heracles', just as the two drops of Gorgon's blood, once given by Athena to Erechthonius but used in the play by Creusa attempting to poison Ion (999-1008), is a physical object linking the woman to Athens' mythic past. Or, as will become clear when the goddess depicted on the temple appears *ex machina* at play's end to arrange matters, it is like Ion himself, who will be shown by the events of the play to have his source in myth. In the exclamations of the women seeing Apollo's temple and again in the the messenger's speech describing the tent built for Ion's birth-feast, myth at Delphi is something represented, remembered, enjoyed — distinct from the events of the drama. But these carefully delimited stories have a way, at Ion's Delphi, of transgressing their boundaries and intruding into the world known to Ion.

The source of these intrusions is Athens; from Athens Ion had been brought to Delphi by the god Hermes and from there now Creusa comes to address Apollo's temple with her complaint about the god's own actions so many years before in the Long Caves at Athens. The events that led up to the enacted story took place at Athens, and the resolution of the tragedy will return the participants to Athens.[18] Like the gods whose appearances introduce and conclude the dramatic action, Athens provides a larger context for the immediate events at Delphi.[19] Within the play itself the city's presence, most vividly given form and voice in the person of Creusa, is maintained also by the tales of its people and finally in the figure of Athena herself. This reiteration of images and stories connected to the city's ancient mythic past are joined by topographical references and allusions to recognizable local ritual and

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[17] Note that both stories likely had existence in the dramatic performance only as verbally defined objects.

[18] Hermes clearly marks the importance of Athens together with Delphi in the prologue when he turns from identifying the setting of the drama and introduces Athens, saying, ἔστιν γὰρ οὐκ ἄσημος Ἑλλήνων πόλις, τῆς χρυσολόγχου Παλλάδος κεκλημένη (8-9). See the discussion by Wolff 1965: 175.

[19] This secondary locale, implicit in the action and defined by the poetry, resembles Egypt in the *Suppliants* of Aeschylus, or Troy for the *Andromache*, or Greece for the *Iphigenia Taurica*. For each of these works, the secondary locale is a point of reference for the dramatic action.

custom. Athens has both immediacy and distance in the *Ion.* Euripides has removed the action of this essentially Athenian tale from Athens to Delphi and has constructed out of her ancient myths a distant backdrop for the dramatic action. But at the same time, through local references and allusions to ritual, he insists upon the continuity joining the dark beginnings of Athens with his audience's own Athens.

The city is represented by its tutelary deity, who, before she appears *ex machina* at the play's end, is present prominently in the center of the gigantomachia sculpted on Apollo's temple (211) and in laudatory references throughout the play.[20] She is the daughter of Zeus , invoked by the chorus of Athenian women as

> σὲ τὰν ὠδίνων λοχιᾶν
> ἀνειλείθυιαν, ἐμὰν
> Ἀθάναν, ἱκετεύω,
> Προμηθεῖ Τιτᾶνι λοχευ-
> θεῖσαν κατ' ἀκροτάτας
> κορυφᾶς Διός, ὦ †μάκαιρα† Νίκα
>
> My Athena, you who were, without the help of Eileithuia,
> in birth pangs, brought forth by Titan Prometheus out of
> the top of Zeus' head, benevolent Victory. (452-7)

Her motherless birth from the head of Zeus defines her and is joined to her power as a warrior among the gods and as defender of the Athenians. In the gigantomachia portrayed on Apollo's temple she is seen at the center attacking the monster Enceledas (209-11); she is the aegis bearer, the bringer of victory. In a rewriting of tradition, Euripides has even made her the slayer of the Gorgon and thus the source of the blood Creusa inherits and tries to use against Ion.[21] But still more, her direct involvement in the affairs of Athens is seen in her care for the survival of Erechthonius, as also now for Ion.

More pervasive than allusions to Athena are references to figures from the myths of Attic origins such as Cecrops, the first king of Athens; his daughters, the Aglaurids; Erechthonius, the child Athena entrusted to them; and his son, Erechtheus, father of Creusa.[22] Their stories belong to the primal sources of Athens and,

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[20] Burnett 1970: 147 catalogues references after noting that "Euripides has not made many direct references to Athena."

[21] Warrior, defender of Athens: 11, 452, 1478; aegis-bearer: 996; bringer of victory: 1529; gorgon-slayer: 1478.

[22] Cecrops: 272, 936, 1163, 1400, 1571; Aglaurids: 23, 496; Erechthonius:

like the gigantomachia of the temple pediment, these images participate in the development of a broader concern in the conflict between what is rational — almost Olympian — in man and what is earth-bound, a conflict that is ultimately expressed in Ion's birth from Apollo and the daughter of the earth-born kings.[23] And they provide to Creusa, to Ion, and to Athens an unbroken line leading back through history to the dimly dark myths of the past.

Joined to these images taken from traditional Attic mythology are allusions to local ritual and custom which through clear topographical references to places familiar at Athens draw a continuous line between these myths and Euripides' Athenian audience. The landscape of Apollo's rape of Creusa and the subsequent exposure of Ion receives vivid definition, starting with Hermes' identification of it:

> ... ἔνθα προσβόρρους πέτρας
> Παλλάδος ὑπ' ὄχθωι τῆς 'Αθηναίων χθονὸς
> Μακρὰς καλοῦσι γῆς ἄνακτες 'Ατθίδος.
>
> There, the northern rocks of Pallas,
> below the hill of the Athenians' land,
> the lords of Attica call them the "Long Rocks"
> (11-13)

Specific without becoming prosaically circumstantial, Hermes' description identifies the locale clearly as the Μακραὶ πέτραι on the north slopes of the Acropolis, but it does so without transgressing the mythic context of his speech. In Ion's first conversation with Creusa the Long Caves are again mentioned:

> Ιων Μακραὶ δὲ χῶρός ἐστ' ἐκεῖ κεκλημένος;
> Κρ. τί δ' ἱστορεῖς τόδ'; ὥς μ' ἀνέμνησάς τινος.
> Ιων τιμᾶι σφε †Πύθιος† 'αστραπαί τε Πύθιαι.
> Κρ. †τιμᾶ τιμᾶ†· ὡς μήποτ' ὤφελόν σφ' ἰδεῖν.
> Ιων τί δέ; στυγεῖς σὺ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ φίλτατα;
> Κρ. οὐδέν· ξύνοιδ' ἄντροισιν αἰσχύνην τινά.
>
> Ion: There is a place there called the Long Rocks?
> Cr: Why do you ask this?
> How you have reminded me of something!
> Ion: Apollo and the Pythian lightning honors it.
> Cr: Honor = Honor. Would that I had never seen it.

21-26, 267ff., 999ff., (for Erechthonius, see Young 1941: 138-42); Erechtheus 281-2, 1261. Also see Hooper 1963: 1-16.

23 In addition to Burnett 1970: 1-15 and 147ff., see Immerwahr 1972: 277-97, Mastronarde 1975: 163-76, Rosivach 1977: 284-94.

Ion. Why do you hate places most dear to the god?
Cr. No reason, but I am conscious of the shame in the cave.
(283-8)

It is an odd exchange, wholly inconclusive in its context, but serving as a transition between the story of Erechtheus and Creusa's explanation of her own situation. Her connection with the place is intimated in her agitated response to Ion's questions. But Ion's inquiry does more than connect Creusa with this specific sacral locale at Athens; it alludes, in the barest possible way, to an Attic ritual, to the preparations in honor of Apollo Pythios for the annual procession from Athens to Delphi.[24] This ritual preparation for the pilgrimage does not seem in fact to have taken place on the North slopes of the Acropolis, but has been moved here by Euripides to join, through this ritual procession that is a palpable ritual link between the two places, the Long Caves at Athens to the Temple of Apollo at Delphi.[25]

But the most intriguing connections joining the Long Caves, the dramatic story, and the audience is provided by the members of the chorus, Creusa's Athenian servants, who sing, in the epode of the first stasimon, of the Long Caves.[26] They characterize them first as the place

ἵνα χοροὺς στείβουσι ποδοῖν
Ἀγλαύρου κόραι τρίγονοι
στάδια χλοερὰ πρὸ Παλλάδος
ναῶν

where the triple-born maidens of Aglauros
tread with their feet
the green fields before the temples
of Pallas (495-8)

The scene described here is a reference to the Arrephoroi or Hersephoroi, an Attic ritual of obscure purpose and nature.[27] Whether

24 Travlos 1971: 91.

25 We must, I think, understand a reference to the Long Caves at 249-51 (not to Creusa's palace home, as the MSS. reading ὄικοι at 251 would suggest); see Diggle 1981b: 97-8.

26 The epode to the first stasimon is, as Owen 1939: *ad* 492 noted, "A mere apostrophe. Its force consists in the contrast of the two clauses introduced by ἵνα, the one describing a scene of joy, the other of calamity." Owen also provides there a sensible working out of the topographical details of the passage.

27 This ritual has been discussed by a number of scholars. Early studies: Harrison 1891: 350-5, 1906: 50-1, 1890: xxxv-xxxvi, 1922: 121-23, 131-4; Powell

it was a fertility ritual or a ritual of initiation for young Athenian girls, however, it certainly was felt to recall the Aglaurids (496), the daughters of Cecrops. To this ritual associated with the Long Caves, the chorus joins a second recollection. In the same place as the Aglaurids celebrate the Attic ritual, says the chorus with the next ἵνα clause,

> ἵνα τεκοῦσά τις
> παρθένος μελέα βρέφος
> Φοίβωι πτανοῖς ἐξόρισεν
> θοίναν θηρσί τε φοινίαν
> δαῖτα, πικρῶν γάμων ὕβριν.
>
> There a certain maiden, unhappy,
> giving birth to a child for Phoebus
> exposed it, a banquet
> for birds and for wild animals a bloody
> feast, the outrage of bitter mating. (503-6)

Creusa's experience of the Long Caves[28] is joined to the contemporary ritual by their shared locus in the vicinity of the Long Caves and because both act as a recollection of the ancient story of the Aglaurids. There is an implicit equation of the two which validates both equally through the evident reality of the Athenian locale. But Creusa is snatched suddenly from this realm and returned to myth in the last two lines of the epode when the chorus compares Creusa's story to stories of its type heard at the loom or elsewhere:

> οὔτ' ἐπὶ κερκίσιν οὔτε λόγων φάτιν
> ἄιον εὐτυχίας μετέχειν θεόθεν τέκνα θνατοῖς.
>
> Never at the loom nor at performances of tales
> have I heard that a child of a god born to mortals
> had a share of luck. (507-8)

The dire outcome warned at in these lines happily will prove false. But their reflections make of Creusa and Ion's story just one more iteration of a familiar myth. Theirs is a comment that asserts

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1906: 38-55; Deubner 1932: 9-17. More recent works: Burkert 1966: 1-25, 1983: 150-4; Parke 1977: 141-3; Robertson 1983: 241-88. This last provides a good introduction to the history of scholarship on the question, focusing on, but not successfully refuting Burkert's thesis.

[28] Creusa is not named by the chorus: τεκοῦσά τις παρθένος, however, is both a respectful circumlocution by the chorus and an evocation of the parallels between Athena caring for Erechthonius and Creusa caring for Ion.

the distance of myth from the world of these Athenian serving women, but which simultaneously acknowledges the intrusion of such a tale into that familiar world.

It is Creusa, come from Athens, who poses the first challenge to the solid reality of Ion's world and whose arrival precipitates Ion's own return to Athens and to his proper place in the mythic line of Athenian kings. From her earliest mention in the play Creusa is closely bound to these evocations of Athens' mythic past. She is first identified in the play, by Hermes in the prologue, as the "child of Erechtheus" (παῖδ' Ἐρεχθέως, 10). And her exposure of Ion, narrated there, is compared to Athena entrusting the child Erechthonius to the Aglaurids; even the snake bracelets she leaves with the baby are iconographic symbols of the Erechtheids and of Athens:

> τεκοῦσ' ἐν οἴκοις παῖδ' ἀπήνεγκεν βρέφος
> ἐς ταὐτὸν ἄντρον οὗπερ ηὐνάσθη θεῶι
> Κρέουσα, κἀκτίθησιν ὡς θανούμενον
> κοίλης ἐν ἀντίπηγος εὐτρόχωι κύκλωι,
> προγόνων νόμον σώιζουσα τοῦ τε γηγενοῦς
> Ἐριχθονίου. κείνωι γὰρ ἡ Διὸς κόρη
> φρουρὼ παραζεύξασα φύλακε σώματος
> δισσὼ δράκοντε, παρθένοις Ἀγλαυρίσιν
> δίδωσι σώιζειν· ὅθεν Ἐρεχθείδαις ἐκεῖ
> νόμος τις ἔστιν ὄφεσιν ἐν χρυσηλάτοις
> τρέφειν τέκν'.
>
> Giving birth to the child in the house, Creusa carried the baby
> to that same cave where she had been bedded by the god
> and she left it there to die
> in a hollow cradle, perfectly rounded,
> keeping the custom of her ancestors and of earth-born
> Erichthonius. For the daughter of Zeus,
> having joined at his side as protection
> two guards over his body, two snakes,
> gave him to the maiden Aglaurids to keep;
> From this there exists at Athens a certain custom
> for the Erechtheids, to rear children
> among gold-wrought serpents. (16-26)

Creusa's ritualized behavior in exposing the child Ion is a reenactment of Athena's own efforts to protect Erechthonius. Hermes' description assimilates the action of mortal girl to that of the goddess and the fate of Ion to that of his divinely-protected forebearer. But even as the passage connects Creusa's experience to these tales of Athens' origins, it seems to stretch the distance

separating Creusa from her grandfather Erechthonius. To describe the practice of using snakes to ornament and protect cradles as a νόμος (19, 25) or even to say that this custom belongs to the Erechtheids (24) is to speak as though the two generations separating Creusa from Erechthonius had grown to twenty; it is to speak as though Creusa belonged to Euripides' own age and not to some distant mythic time.

It is in her initial conversation with Ion that Creusa is most pointedly joined to the distant, mythic past of Athens, even as she is vividly realized as a character (238-400).[29] The queen, approaching the god's temple in tears, identifies herself to Ion tersely, "My name is Creusa; I am born of Erechtheus; my homeland is the city of Athenians," (Κρέουσα μέν μοι τοὔνομ', ἐκ δ' Ἐρεχθέως πέφυκα, πατρὶς γῆ δ' Ἀθηναίων πόλις 260-1). The youth, though he wonders at her tears, is eager, on learning her identity, to know whether all those distant tales that he has heard about the Erechtheids at Athens are true. Like the servant women gaping at the stories told in the temple sculptures, Ion is excited to hear again the stories he knows; so he importunes the Athenian queen with some notably specific questions. First he asks about her ancestor Erechthonius, "Was he really taken from the ground by Athena and entrusted to the daughters of Cecrops?" (267). It is a story that parallels Apollo's own care for Ion, and, though he cannot know this, his inquiry calls attention to the parallel. Creusa confirms the truth of the tale (268). Then he wants to know whether her own father has actually killed her sisters — and why had she been spared? (271-80). Creusa explains these things too, only to be asked about her own situation, her marriage and the reason for her trip to Delphi (289ff.). But when the queen explains to this eager temple servant that she has come to Apollo's temple to address a question to the oracle — for a "friend," she quickly dissimulates — about a child born to the union of the woman and Apollo himself (338), Ion is shocked and denies the story — denies, too, that such a matter can be addressed to the god's oracle (339, 369-80). Ion and Creusa first come to know each other against the backdrop of these stories, which have the effect of tracing the lineage of the kings of Athens and outlining their stories — this always with reference to Creusa and concluding finally with her.

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29 Wolff 1965: 182.

Creusa's story of rape and the exposure of her child, intimated first in her tears as she stood before the temple of Apollo (249-54) and told now, with some dissimulation, to Ion, provides one connection between the intensely human events of the drama and the mythic stories that form their background. From the first, Creusa is treated with the careful realism that is Euripides' hallmark in the dramatization of traditional stories. In the smallest detail — her telling of her own story as though it were that of a friend — as in her profound willingness to forget her own sufferings, if only the god will tell her that their child lives, she moves through the story as a fully realized character. Yet her experience of Apollo some years ago and her place in the mythic history of Athens distinguish her. From Creusa, standing before the god's oracle there in Delphi, to Athens and the myths associated with its greatness, back to Creusa: Euripides has structured this initial encounter between Creusa and Ion so that Creusa, even as she stands before us in the flesh, is shown to be a part of a mythic continuum. She is at once a woman whose tears and words are evidence of her deeply felt sorrow, and a part of the traditional mythology of Athens.[30]

Ion, too, has a place in the line of the mythic kings of Athens, as the events of this play will establish. This is intimated by the identity suggested between him and Erechthonius in Hermes' speech and throughout the play (20-24, 1571-4). But Ion is as yet unaware of his place among the mythic forebears of Athens. The stories Ion has questioned Creusa about are for him just stories, objects of curiosity, like the temple sculptures for the chorus.[31] But Creusa's account of Apollo's rape and her request to consult the oracle about it intrudes into his world a real and effective event which challenges his understanding of the god he serves and of himself. He will respond to Creusa's tale, defend against the intrusion of myth into his world, with a rationalist critique of such tales illogically joined to a denunciation of such immoral behavior by the gods (436-51). Ion is as yet innocent of the mythic dimensions of the god he serves, or, indeed, of his own. It will take the events of the drama to confront him with these aspects

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[30] Whitman 1974: 82-5.

[31] Note that he constantly calls into question the truth of such stories (at lines 265, 275, 281, but especially 271); on this characteristic, see Whitman 1974: 78-9.

and bring him to his proper place in the mythic origins at Athens.

In what follows, Xuthus will emerge from the god's oracle to claim Ion as son (517ff.), and the disgruntled youth will face the unhappy prospect of going to Athens as the bastard son of the interloper king (585ff). Creusa, determined to protect Athenian autochthony, will resolve to kill the temple youth with the deadly blood of the Gorgon derived from Athena herself (859ff.). And Ion, rescued from this death, will himself threaten the life of the god's supplicant and his own mother (1261ff.). There arises at Delphi a chaos of conflicting passions driven by Ion's own ruthless logic, which ends finally when Ion is confronted by the irreducible illogic of having two fathers, one human, one divine (1482).[32]

Confronted in Creusa's announcement of her union with Apollo (1537-8) with a seeming ἀδύνατον, Ion refuses to believe what Creusa tells him and looks rather for the nearer, more plausible explanation. He is willing to accept his own base origins, even, to make sense out of the news she gives to him. He demands:

ὅρα σύ, μῆτερ, μὴ σφαλεῖσ' ἃ παρθένος
ἐγγίγνεται νοσήματ' ἐς κρυπτοὺς γάμους
ἔπειτα τῶι θεῶι προστίθῃς τὴν αἰτίαν
καὶ τοὐμὸν αἰσχρὸν ἀποφυγεῖν πειρωμένη
Φοίβωι τεκεῖν με φῂς, τεκοῦσ' οὐκ ἐκ θεοῦ.

See to it , mother, that you do not, having been deceived,
in those afflictions that come to a girl in a secret liaison,
then put the blame on the god
and, in trying to escape shame on my account,
you say that it was to Phoebus that you bore me,
when your child came not from a god. (1523-7)

His scrutiny of Creusa's story is characteristic of him and recalls his equally analytical response to her initial story of the god's rape of a "friend" (339ff.), to Xuthus' unexpected greeting as he came from the oracle (517ff.), and to the thought of going to Athens as Xuthus' heir (585ff.). In every case, Ion seizes upon the reasonable, the pragmatic, the human explanation which is nearer at hand; he does not deny myth, but until Creusa's announcement of his divine paternity, it is not a part of his world.

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32 See Whitman's remarks 1974: 102-3.

When Athena steps in to resolve this dilemma, it is as though she returns Ion and his story to its mythic frame.[33] Ion's reunion with his mother and discovery of his divine father becomes the legitimization of the heir of Erechtheus and the justification for him to return to Athens and assume his place there. Athena commands Creusa:

λαβοῦσα τόνδε παῖδα Κεκροπίαν χθόνα
χώρει, Κρέουσα, κἀς θρόνους τυραννικοὺς
ἵδρυσον. ἐκ γὰρ τῶν Ἐρεχθέως γεγὼς
δίκαιος ἄρχειν τῆς ἐμῆς ὅδε χθονός,
ἔσται δ᾽ ἀν᾽ Ἑλλάδ᾽ εὐκλεής. οἱ τοῦδε γὰρ
παῖδες γενόμενοι τέσσαρες ῥίζης μιᾶς
ἐπώνυμοι γῆς κἀπιφυλίων χθονὸς
λαῶν ἔσονται, σκόπελον οἳ ναίουσ᾽ ἐμόν.

Take this child and go to the land of Cecrops,
Creusa, and set him on the royal throne.
For since he has been born of those born of Erechtheus,
it is right that he rule my land.
He will have fame throughout Greece. For his children,
four arising from a single root,
will give their names to the land and to peoples divided into
tribes, who inhabit my headlands. (1571-8)

Her words are political and impersonal, and have been criticized for their disjunctive effect after the warmly human events of the drama.[34] We have seen a young man move from childish innocence to a more mature knowledge of himself, and would like to see the kindly goddess of his city bringing him to Athens and an awareness of his new adult responsibilities. That is implicit in her role here. But her words, which speak of the "Cecropian land" and Erechtheus and which focus on the political implications of Ion's newly discovered identity, suggest that her interests here are not primarily personal. The effect of her words is to bring Ion from Delphi, where we have watched his story unfold in all its human implications, to Athens where he will take his place in the formal procession of figures from Athens' mythic past.

With the arrival of Athena and her confirmation of Apollo's paternity, the mythic elements of Ion's story, which up to now have been secondary to the essentially human events being enacted, command attention. The oracle is replaced by the goddess

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33 Wassermann 1940: 600.

34 Especially Verrall 1890: xviii-xix. But see Wolff 1974: 188.

as the source of divine knowledge, Xuthus is supplanted by Apollo as Ion's father, and Ion is directed to leave the essentially realistic Delphi for an Athens defined by the ancient myths of her foundations. The doubling seen throughout the play of mythic and realistic elements is here resolved in an emphatic assertion of the priority of the mythic.

When Athena commands Ion and Creusa to leave Delphi for Athens she adds a final injunction to silence about Ion's divine father:

> νῦν οὖν σιώπα παῖς ὅδ' ὡς πέφυκε σός,
> ἵν' ἡ δόκησις Ξοῦθον ἡδέως ἔχηι
> σύ τ' αὖ τὰ σαυτῆς ἀγάθ' ἔχουσ' ἴηις, γύναι.
>
> So now tell no one that this child is yours,
> so that Xuthus may retain his sweet delusion
> and you in turn may depart in possession of your own blessings,
> woman (1601-3)

Ion is to seem the son of Xuthus, though in fact the son of a god: all is to appear at Athens as the oracle had resolved it.[35] The plausible explanation of Ion's birth is given the appearance of truth, while the actual truth, the mythic explanation of these events, is to remain hidden behind this plausibility. The assertion of the priority of the mythic explanation is undeniable. But as Euripides has composed the work, it is the reality of the human drama that the audience sees, the mortal father who appears in the play, and the temple, not the god, that is the evident source of these events. Euripides merges the two distinct realms of the play as Ion is shown to be the son of both a divine and a human father: the youth whose loss of innocent world view and discovery of identity has informed the action of the play is now revealed as the father of the Ionian race. He is both the human character convincingly drawn and a mythic figure of political significance.

Euripides has given this story a structure that depends upon a distinction between the mythic and the real, but one that depends as well upon a continuity between the two. Ion and Creusa are both convincingly drawn human characters whose conflict and reconciliation draw on our sympathy, and mythic figures of

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[35] The command appears intended to ensure the secrecy for Apollo's connection to Ion that was a motive of the original plan Hermes outlined.

political significance.[36] And the temple of Apollo, which seems to act contrary to Apollo's own will in the drama, is shown at its end to have expressed the true will of the god. The action is bounded by the two cities, which seem to occupy the separate realms of myth and reality in the drama, but at the end, there is no question that Ion and Creusa can go from one to the other. A more important continuity linking the mythically defined Athens of Creusa and Ion to the contemporary world of Euripides' Athenian audience remains implicit in the appeals to Athenian patriotism as in the local references that fill the play. And yet, as Athena directs her young charge's attention to Athens and away from Delphi, Euripides invites those sitting at the foot of the Acropolis in Dionysus' theater to make a similar journey that acknowledges what joins Ion's world to their own.

Providing more than simply a physical context for the dramatic action, the setting of the *Ion* is used to express and reinforce the significant duality of the mythic ideal and the human reality found throughout the play. Delphi and Apollo's temple, Athens and the acropolis are necessary for the plot as Euripides has constructed it, but they are more significant for the poet's development of his concern with myth and its ennobling power. The extent to which setting is important for the *Ion* is unusual among the extant works; but in other works it is not uncommon for setting, when called forth by the plot, to be developed to serve, in a similar if more limited manner, broad thematic functions. The altar or cult locale that is necessarily present in suppliant dramas is regularly used, as in the *Ion*, to introduce into the drama the deity whom the cult honors. So too is the division of attention between the place where the dramatic events occur and the place that is the goal of those events, between Delphi and Athens in the *Ion*, a common feature of stories that tell of exile and return. These common patterns of action, which will be discussed in the chapters that follow, encourage, if they do not require, that a measure of attention be given to the dramatic setting. The broad similarities in the way setting is used in plays of the same pattern seems due to the common requirements of plot. But the wide variation in the thematic function of setting in these works gives some further indication of the expressive range of this element of tragic plot.

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36 Wassermann 1940: 593-4.

CHAPTER THREE

SUPPLICATION AND CULT

Supplication, like receiving an oracle, is a familiar function of cult in the Greek world and the most common reason for the presence of cult settings in the extant tragedies.[1] Taking refuge at an altar or in a sacred grove is a temporary measure for a person who is otherwise without defense (as, for example, an exile), by which he or she claims the protection of the gods until a defender may arrive to provide a more permanent refuge. Evidence in contemporary prose authors makes clear that the single constraint on suppliants is that they maintain direct physical contact with the sacred site: by such contact they establish themselves as part of the god's *temenos* and assume for themselves the inviolability of the place.[2] The efficacy of a suppliant's appeal does not depend upon the specific identity of the god to whom the appeal is made. Zeus, in his capacity as Ζεὺς ἱκέσιος, is most closely associated with the suppliant as his champion. But the sacred locale of any god, whatever the greatness of the deity or the place, may be claimed by a suppliant as refuge—and as such transgressed at great risk.[3]

But if, in actual practice, the inviolability of a suppliant is established simply by his contact with a sacred spot and is without reference to the identity of the suppliant, the reason he must seek refuge, or his connection with the deity, the ritual is significantly altered to enhance the significatory possibilities of the action when it is introduced into tragedy.[4] There, in almost every example, supplication is transformed by the addition of affective connections that derive from the mythic relationship of suppliant and deity. The narrative possibilities inherent in the metonymic

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[1] The best overview of supplication is offered by Gould 1973: 79-103; see also Kopperschmidt 1971: 321-46 and Burian 1971.

[2] Nilsson 1940: 73, 1955: I, 77-9; Kopperschmidt 1971: 320-1. Passages in ancient authors: Hdt. 1 157-60, 3 48.1-4, 5 71, 6 78.2-79.1; Thuc. 1.133-4, 136-7, 3.70-81; Xen. *Hell.* 2 3.52-6; 6 5.9; these are discussed by Gould 1973: 82-5.

[3] Farnell 1896: I, 66-7, n. 143, 173; Nilsson 1940: 77; Burian 1971: 5; Lloyd-Jones 1971: 30.

[4] Strohm1957: 17ff.

connection of cult site with deity are exploited alongside the possibilities inherent in the supplication situation itself.

When in the *Ion* Creusa makes her initial appeal to Apollo at his temple, as later when she seeks his protection as a suppliant at his altar, her action demands a response from Apollo on two separate — but often in tragedy inextricably joined — grounds. Her initial appeal to Apollo's oracle regarding children is typical of the private concerns actually brought in the fifth century to this oracle in hopes of obtaining relief from ἀπαιδία or any other difficulty.[5] Delphi is a reasonable place for her to make her inquiry, and she is right in expecting the god's reply if she follows the proper ritual procedure defined by his attendants for addressing her question. But even as her appeal is the familiar appeal of individuals who visit the oracle, it is also an appeal privileged because of her unusual personal relationship with the god.[6] This second justification, the personal connection she may claim with the god, gives the greatest weight to her appeal, and provides, as well, narrative relevance to the ritual. In a very similar way the supplication action in tragedy is regularly doubly motivated. The suppliant is impelled to seek divine protection, and the playwright has him do so at a site sacred to a deity with whom he has prior connections in the mythic tradition. In this way the poet may

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[5] Parke and Wormell 1956: 393-415; Fontenrose 1978: 39-41.

[6] Creusa is prevented from ever actually addressing her question to the deity by Ion's recognition of the incongruities of the request — incongruities that arise out of the disjunctions inherent in Creusa's double connection to the god (see above Chapter 2, page 51). The effect for the tragedy is as if she had asked the questions, for her appeal is clearly stated for the audience's benefit, and when the god seems to ignore this appeal that is doubly justified, the god stands doubly accused. Failure of such an appeal grounded in ritual, just as the failure of supplication, must ultimately bring censure upon the god who thus betrays the relationship between worshipper and god that is established by ritual as well as the peculiar personal relationship between the human and the god. The condemnation of a deity for a failed or apparently ineffectual supplication, practically a *topos* of such dramas, often generates speeches that condemn the gods, raising issues of human and divine justice. Such speeches are not confined to scenes of supplication; compare Ion's similar speech condemning the irresponsible behavior of gods who rape mortal women but condemn mortal men for such behavior (*Ion* 436ff.). It is interesting that this speech, though not directly a response to any ritual, is closely tied to the temple, to which Ion expressly turns to to make the accusations, and it immediately precedes his denial of the possibility of making Creusa's appeal to the god. See Stinton 1976: 80-89; Stinton is answered by Brown 1978: 22-30; but see Grube 1941: 53.

exploit for his work peripheral mythic associations with the place and the events being enacted there.

In tragedy as in reality, supplication marks a crisis in which the appeal of the suppliants for human protection is uncertainly balanced against the attempts by the aggressor to woo or wrest them from their sacred refuge.[7] In the *Andromache*, the action of the first third of the drama is taken up with the eventually successful attempts of Menelaus and Hermione to lure Andromache from the *temenos* of Thetis; so too in the *Heracles*, the supplication of Heracles' family and resistance to the threats of the tyrant Lycus, who offers them an ignominious death by fire if the family insists on remaining at Zeus' altar, fill the opening scene of the drama. In the *Oedipus at Colonus*, the contest between suppliant and aggressor reaches its climax as Creon demonstrates his arrogance and tests Theseus' willingness to protect his suppliants when he has Antigone and Ismene snatched away, though they are the gods' suppliants. By such contests of will and force between the suppliant and the aggressor, the sacred site that effectively serves as a barrier between them gains a measure of prominence — prominence inherent in ritual supplication, but made more emphatic in the enactment of the ritual by the narrative associations regularly evoked by the tragedians through the sacred setting.

The Suppliant Women *of Aeschylus*

The earliest extant drama of supplication, the *Suppliant Women* of Aeschylus,[8] demonstrates the rhetorical use of the connection between Ζεὺς ἱκέσιος and Zeus who engendered Epaphus, the ancestor of those who now make themselves the god's suppliants. The altar, however, plays an inconsequential part in the supplication action; the doubly motivated appeal of the suppliants is articulated rather by the verbal attention given to the ritual form of supplication. The play begins as the Danaids, in flight from Egypt and marriage to their cousins, take refuge at the altar (vaguely

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[7] Burian 1971: 4, 26-7 analyzes the action into its components: "flight, pursuit, rescue; corresponding to them are the roles of suppliant, enemy and savior;" Kopperschmidt 1971: 323-4 includes a catalogue of suppliant situations in tragedy.

[8] Garvie 1969: viff. dates the play tenatively to the 460s; he is followed by Johansen and Whittle 1980: 21-29; but see 21, n. 1 for scholars who reject this later date.

identified at that of the ἀγώνιοι θεοί [189]) and make their appeal for immediate protection to Zeus as the god of suppliants.[9] The case they make to the Argives, which is the central issue of this first play of a trilogy, rests wholly on an assertion of kinship to Argos through their ancestor Epaphus, son of Argive Io and Zeus (14-22, 40-46, 291-324, 325-6).[10] The suppliants invoke Epaphus as their champion and recall through him the union of Zeus and Io:

νῦν δ' ἐπικεκλομένα
Δῖον πόρτιν, ὑπερπόντιον τιμάορ', ἶνίν γ'
ἀνθονομούσας προγόνου βοὸς ἐξ ἐπιπνοίας
Ζηνός· ἔφαψιν ἐπωνυμίαν δ' ἐπεκραίνετο μόρσιμος αἰὼν
εὐλόγως, Ἔπαφον δ' ἐγέννασεν·

ὅν τ' ἐπιλεξαμένα
νῦν ἐν ποιονόμοις ματρὸς ἀρχαίας τόποις τῶν
πρόσθε πόνων μνασαμένα, τάδε νῦν ἐπιδείξω
πιστὰ τεκμήρια, γαιονόμοισι δ' ἄελπτά περ ὄντα
φανεῖται·
γνώσεται δὲ λόγου τις ἐν μάκει.

Now calling upon as helper
the divine calf from across the sea, the child
born from the flower-grazing cow and
the breath of Zeus.
Aptly the fated time brought about the caress
that gave him a name and brought forth Epaphus.

Invoking him now
recalling the earlier labors of his ancient mother
in the grazing fields,
I will now show trusty tokens,
although unexpected, they will appear to those who live here
though at length the story will be known (40-56)

Io is the ultimate source of the claim to Argive kinship on which they base their appeal for help. But her story also provides a parallel to the suppliants' own flight from marriage; it is a paradigm, however, that, by looking to the beneficience of Zeus evinced in Epaphus, must in fact call into question their refusal to marry.[11] It is only through her union with Zeus that Io offers these women, who themselves flee marriage, a safe haven at

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9 Ζεὺς Ἀφίκτωρ (1) = ἱκέσιος, see 241. Hesych s.v. ἀφίκτωρα· τὸν ἱκέσιον Δία (Johansen and Whittle 1980: ad 1); Gould 1973: 89-90; Kopperschmidt 1971: 324-8; Burian1971: 38ff.

10 Burian 1971: 48.

11 Burian 1971: 42ff. discusses this fully.

Argos. Thus, through Io, Zeus joins to his role as the deity appropriate to the appeals of any suppliant, a second one as ancestor to these suppliants.[12]

The dual function of the deity in the suppliant action is clear: he is joined to the suppliants both by ritual and by family ties. But ritual here is not defined, as will be common in later plays, by a ritual setting: the altar at which the Danaids take up their suppliant stance does not even belong to Zeus. In this early play, it is the ritual of supplication, which is given extensive attention and detailing, that introduces and defines the deity. The poet's technique of exploiting the implications of the joint claims a suppliant may make upon a god is similar to one use Euripides regularly finds in the supplication form, and resembles Sophocles' use of the form in the *Oedipus at Colonus.* The difference is that in those later plays the cult setting of the supplication action is important to the definition of the ritual and the introduction of the god.

The Heracleidae

Like Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women* this much later play exploits only one aspect of the usual tragic relationship between suppliant and god. The appeal of Iolaus and the children of Heracles for Athenian protection from Argive aggressors takes place before the temple of Zeus at Marathon.[13] Careful identification of the locale is made by Iolaos (31-4, 69-72), and Zeus receives a measure of attention as the suppliants anxiously anticipate the battle to be fought between Athens and Argos and as they rejoice later over its outcome (344-52, 718-9, 867-8). But references made to Zeus' traditional role as protector of suppliants are extremely general (61-2, 238-9), and the suppliants' appeal to Athens[14] noticeably ignores

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[12] Even as Io provides their tenuous claim to Greekness, Zeus seems almost to mark their foreignness. Supplication is claimed here as a peculiarly Greek rite and Zeus at its center as the definitively Greek god (190ff; 207-21; *passim*); Burian 1971: 47 remarks, "One important function of the motif of supplication in Hik. is to establish a contrast between Hellenism and foreignness which helps to characterize the Danaids. Supplication is an Hellenic custom."

[13] Burnett 1976: 5 represents this nicely: "Heaven's legislation is seen in its customary and general form, for it is represented by the *nomos* of sanctuary." For the significance of the geographic locale, see Wilamowitz 1935: 75-81, Zuntz 1955: 97-8, Burian1971: 91. Strohm 1957:17-20 makes the comparison with Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women.*

[14] Zuntz 1955: 99-104 discusses the deliberate blurring of the distinction

the connection of Zeus, as father of Heracles, to Heracles' family. Rather, just as the altar and temple of the god serve as the visual focus of the disasters that are confronted and resolved in the course of this play, so Zeus is repeatedly made the stable center of the order that defines the action — and that is so harshly disrupted by the disconcerting conclusion of the tragedy. Zeus here is not active on stage or in the words of the characters as a god connected by narrative associations to the suppliants.[15] His role, established in myth, as the father of Heracles is never exploited. He is present rather more as an abstraction, as a poetic expression for the concept of "world-law."[16] The poet's decision to set this play at an altar belonging specifically to Zeus derives more from the apparent suitability of the supreme Olympian as a symbol of moral order, than from any desire to use the connections inherent in the narrative tradition.

The Andromache

Produced only a few years after the *Heracleidae*, the *Andromache*[17] offers the clearest example of the way cult settings come most often to be exploited in tragedy as a visual focus of the dramatic action and the source of a nexus of associations that are secondary to the plot but thematically critical. The altar of the nymph Thetis, the mother of Achilles, is at the middle of the suppliant action that dominates the first third of the play and its presence anticipates the appearance of the goddess herself *ex machina* at play's end. But during the course of the play it functions to introduce recollections of the Trojan War, which provide a backdrop against which the dramatic action is played and derives its significance.[18]

The *Andromache* takes place in Phthia, before the palace of Neoptolemus (21) and a shrine to the nymph Thetis (41-4). Neither the geographic locale nor the cult setting of the drama can have been

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between Marathon and Athens throught this play.

[15] Pohlenz 1954: I, 358; Burian 1971: 120, 310 remarks "Divine justice is not so much an issue as an assumption of the play."

[16] Zuntz 1955: 48-54 notes "The highest god, though still addressed in traditional terms, has faded into an abstraction implying the moral law."

[17] Stevens 1971: 15-21 dates it "about 425;" see also Ritchie 1964: 262-3, 284-7; 1967: 28, 118.

[18] Grube 1941: 203ff. discusses the place of the Trojan War in the *Andromache*. Also see Conacher 1967: 16ff.; Rabinowitz 1984: 118-20.

well known in actuality to Euripides' audience, although from the stories of Troy they would recognize Phthia as the home of Achilles and Thetis as his mother. Euripides here has chosen to locate the dramatic action in a landscape far from the actual knowledge of his audience, on the edge of the Greek world, in a place known only in stories of the Trojan War and there associated only with the hero Achilles.[19] The cult site, a *temenos* seemingly including both altar, statue and temple, would be recognizable in its generic features from its sacral function in the play. It serves as a refuge for Andromache, who takes her place there as a suppliant when the play begins, and is the focus of attention throughout the first movement of the drama as Hermione and then Menelaus try to persuade her to abandon the *temenos* and the protection it offers.[20]

Andromache in the prologue, reflecting on her life at Troy, explains how she has come to be a slave of Achilles' son Neoptolemus, and to live in a place "near Phthia and the city of Pharsalia" (16-17).[21] Her recollections, which will be taken up by a series of people throughout the drama, force a review of the whole of the Trojan War and a consideration of its significance for the survivors and their less than heroic world. Thetis enters Andromache's introductory monologue when the Trojan captive describes the place of her present crisis:

> Φθίας δὲ τῆσδε καὶ πόλεως Φαρσαλίας
> σύγχορτα ναίω πεδί', ἵν' ἡ θαλασσία
> Πηλεῖ ξυνῴκει χωρὶς ἀνθρώπων Θέτις
> φεύγουσ' ὅμιλον· Θεσσαλὸς δέ νιν λεὼς
> Θετίδειον αὐδᾶι θεᾶς χάριν νυμφευμάτων.

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[19] Burnett 1971: 131 characterizes it as a "strange scene, a country neither Greek nor non-Greek."

[20] Strohm 1957: 27-9. Burnett 1971: 138 remarks, "[Andromache] is a foreigner in the *tempietto* of a very local, very minor divinity, and for this reason she seems to be appealing rather to Neoptolemus' grandmother than to a god."

[21] Stevens 1971: ad 16-21 would have the initial identification of the immediate locale of the drama (17-18) describe generally the district as belonging to Thetis and only the later passage (43) serving as an identification of the *temenos* of the goddess. Strabo 9.5.6 and Polybius 18.20.6 do support this identification, but the distinction seems over-precise for the expression Euripides has given to it. Whatever their real referents, however, the two mentions of Thetis with Peleus within thirty lines of each other must be understood together.

I dwell in the plains adjoining Phthia here
and the Pharsalian city, where Thetis of the sea
lived apart from mortals with Peleus,
fleeing the crowd; the Thessalians
call it the shrine of Thetis in honor of the goddess' wedding.
(16-20)

Soon afterward, when she has explained how the jealousy of Neoptolemus' new wife, Hermione, for her status as concubine and mother of his only son, has driven her to seek refuge at the shrine of Thetis, she explains her decision in terms similar to the earlier descriptive passage, saying that she came to the temple of Thetis,

δειματουμένη δ' ἐγὼ
δόμων πάροικον Θέτιδος εἰς ἀνάκτορον
θάσσω τόδ' ἐλθοῦσ', ἤν με κωλύσῃ θανεῖν.
Πηλεύς τε γάρ νιν ἔκγονοί τε Πηλέως
σέβουσιν, ἑρμήνευμα Νηρῇδος γάμων.

but I, being afraid,
swiftly came to this shrine of Thetis here next to the house,
so that perhaps she might keep me from dying,
since Peleus and the offspring of Peleus
revere it, as a monument of the marriage of the Nereid.
(42-6)

Twice then, Andromache, delivering the introductory monologue from her suppliant's pose at the temple of Thetis, characterizes the place as closely connected with the goddess and connected, in particular, with her marriage to Peleus. This family connection is stressed again when Thetis herself appears to Peleus at the play's end, coming, she explains "for the sake of our previous marriage" (χάριν σοι τῶν πάρος νυμφευμάτων, 1231, cf. 20). At the beginning of the play, in the description and function of the cult of Thetis, as at its end, in the goddess's own appearance, Thetis is present both as a tutelary deity whose altar can protect the suppliant and as an interested member of Achilles' family, naturally concerned in the enacted proceedings.[22]

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[22] She is, however, much less actively a source of the dramatic action than Apollo in the *Ion*, though he there never in fact appears. Her altar or temple, to be sure, is necessary to the plot, but she has no part to play in the enacted events until she intrudes on the scene to bring a resolution *ex machina* from Zeus (1231-1283). Her role is much less direct; Euripides has used the goddess and her cult not to develop the action of his story, but to delineate within it some of the themes that concern him.

Thetis, in her marriage with Peleus, alluded to in Andromache's opening descriptive monologue, anticipates the recurring importance of marriage in the dramatic action, and affirms it when she herself appears to Peleus "because of their marriage" (1231) and brings the action to a conclusion. This marriage of a goddess to a mortal, with the benefit it brings in the end to him, joins with references to other marriages in the *Andromache* in a paradigmatic role. The importance of marriage in the *Andromache* is evident. The marriage of Neoptolemus and Hermione has been urged with some reason as the central motivating force of the dramatic action.[23] From it come Andromache's present crisis, Hermione's eventual fear of Neoptolemus that leads her to abandon her husband for Orestes, and, in turn, Neoptolemus' death arranged by the jealous Orestes. The importance of a good marriage and the disaster attendent upon a bad one are stressed in the action and in Peleus' concluding remarks (1279-82). And to this Euripides has added such exemplars of marriage as that of Hector and Andromache with which Hermione's attack on Andromache is answered (221 ff.). Another marriage paradigmatic in nature is evoked in Peleus' confrontation with Menelaus, when Hermione is said to resemble her mother Helen (619-23) — an accusation substantiated when Hermione blithely leaves her husband's house with Orestes. These two marriages, Hector and Andromache's, a powerful positive example, and that of Helen and Menelaus, an example of a destructive and failed marriage, stand behind the domestic drama of the play, unifying the action and effecting a connection between the rather homely battles enacted here and the epic struggle at Troy.

The marriage of Peleus and Thetis, recalled by the described setting of the drama, is important in the tradition as the single event that marks the beginning of the Trojan War and as the union that produced its greatest warrior, Achilles. It was, of course, at their wedding that Eris instigated the rivalry among the Olympian goddesses that Paris was forced to resolve, winning for himself Helen and for Troy destruction. Thus, these two early references to Thetis and her marriage to Peleus initiate a series of more elaborate references throughout the tragedy to the Trojan War, and create for the *Andromache* a secondary field of reference.

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[23] Aldrich1961: 67ff; see also Rabinowitz 1984: 111-123.

Resembling the role of Athens in the *Ion*, this secondary field in the *Andromache* relies not on the immediacy of the audience's own city, but on the familiarity and rich associations of the poetic traditions surrounding the Trojan War.[24] The well-known epic tales, used and scrutinized here by Euripides, provide a familiar landscape against which the events of the *Andromache* must be understood.

The creation of this secondary context of antecedent events in which the dramatic action is to be evaluated begins, in fact, in the first line of the play, even before Andromache identifies the locale of the action. She introduces herself and the play by offering her personal history, which is also a summary of the war and its aftermath that moves from innocence and joy to loss and degradation. She begins with an address to the place of her birth (1), recollects her movement from there to her husband's home (2-3) and reaches the climax of her happy memories as she recalls her life before the war against Greece (4-5):

> Ἀσιάτιδος γῆς σχῆμα, Θηβαία πόλι,
> ὅθεν ποθ' ἕδνων σὺν πολυχρύσωι χλιδῆι
> Πριάμου τύραννον ἑστίαν ἀφικόμην
> δάμαρ δοθεῖσα παιδοποιὸς Ἕκτορι,
> ζηλωτὸς ἔν γε τῶι πρὶν Ἀνδρομάχη χρόνωι,
>
> O Asian land, O city of Thebes
> from where long ago with a dowry of gold encrusted ornaments
> I came to the royal hearth of Priam,
> given as wife and child-bearer to Hector,
> I, Andromache, envied – at least in that earlier time. (1-5)

The nostalgia of these lines, delivered by Andromache as she crouches, a suppliant at Thetis' altar, anticipates the turn in fortune and the sorrows that she and her husband's city were forced to endure when Paris takes Helen and the Greeks attack. Those events are also recalled in highly personal terms, as Andromache recounts, in five lines that balance the joy of her earlier life, the deaths of her husband and her son:

> νῦν δ', εἴ τις ἄλλη, δυστυχεστάτη γυνή·
> [ἐμοῦ πέφυκεν ἢ γενήσεταί ποτε]

[24] Burnett 1971: 140-1 seems almost to describe the same phenomenon in a different way and with different implications when she says "[Menelaus] and Andromache finally face one another almost as life and art," and "[Andromache's] alien world is not so much Asia, however, as it is the tragic stage." Vellacott 1975: 117ff. joins the themes differently.

ἥτις πόσιν μὲν Ἕκτορ' ἐξ Ἀχιλλέως
θανόντ' ἐσεῖδον, παῖδά θ' ὃν τίκτω πόσει
ῥιφθέντα πύργων Ἀστυάνακτ' ἀπ' ὀρθίων,
ἐπεὶ τὸ Τροίας εἷλον Ἕλληνες πέδον· (6-11)

But now, if any woman is, I am the most unfortunate:
since I looked upon my husband, Hector, dying
at Achilles' hand, and the child whom I bore to my husband,
Astyanax, cast from the sheer citadel,
when the Greeks captured the plain of Troy. (6, 8-11)

What Andromache suffered "when the Greeks captured the plain of Troy" fills the coda to her self-introduction:

αὐτὴ δὲ δούλη τῶν ἐλευθερωτάτων
οἴκων νομισθεῖσ' Ἑλλάδ' εἰσαφικόμην
τῶι νησιώτηι Νεοπτολέμωι δορὸς γέρας
δοθεῖσα λείας Τρωικῆς ἐξαίρετον.

But I, once thought to belong to the freest of houses,
came to Greece, given to the islander Neoptolemus,
a spear-won prize
taken from the Trojan plunder. (12-15)

Andromache contrasts her joyful movement from the home of her birth to her husband's home laden with rich gifts for her marriage portion, with her harrowing transfer from Troy to Greece to become the concubine of Neoptolemus, herself now part of the costly wealth changing hands.[25] Andromache is, as Stevens points out, "one whose thoughts keep turning to the past,"[26] but they do so not to remain and find refuge there but to reiterate incessantly the distance between past and present realities. She marks this distance emphatically, contrasting her prior enviable position with her present luckless state (5-6). Indeed, her position as suppliant at play's beginning points up just how utterly without resources she is.

An evocative picture of Troy and the destruction brought by the war grows throughout the play, starting from this introduction of

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25 The actions are described in almost identical terms: in both Andromache is said to have been given to a man (δοθεῖσα 4, 15) and to have arrived in his land (ἀφικόμην, 3; εἰσαφικόμην, 13; note that both verbs are line final); her movement is associated in either case with the transfer of wealth (2, 15). The comparison implicit here participates in the motif of marriage which Euripides develops in the *Andromache*. For the movement of the woman in Greek traditional tales, seen below, Chapter 5.

26 1971: ad 1-55; compare to this passage Andromache's account of the sack of her home by Achilles, *Iliad* 6. 406-23.

Andromache's. After an interchange with a servant, she concludes her monologue with a more impassioned outcry in elegiacs that introduces Helen's part in the war:

> Ἰλίωι αἰπεινᾶι Πάρις οὐ γάμον ἀλλά τιν' ἄταν
> ἠγάγετ' εὐναίαν εἰς θαλάμους Ἑλέναν.
> ἇς ἕνεκ', ὦ Τροία, δορὶ καὶ πυρὶ δηιάλωτον
> εἷλέ σ' ὁ χιλιόναυς Ἑλλάδος ὠκὺς Ἄρης
> καὶ τὸν ἐμὸν μελέας πόσιν Ἕκτορα, τὸν περὶ τείχη
> εἵλκυσε διφρεύων παῖς ἁλίας Θέτιδος·
>
> To lofty Ilium Paris brought no bride
> but rather a certain madness:
> he brought into his bedchamber bed-keeping Helen,
> because of whom, O Troy, with spear and fire
> Greece's swift thousand-shipped Ares took you captive
> and my husband, Hector of sorrowful Andromache, was dragged
> around the walls by the chariot-driving child
> of Thetis of the sea. (103-8)

Framing the central couplet in which Andromache mourns the Greek destruction of Troy, are two couplets in which the suppliant contrasts the illicit liaison made by Paris and Helen (Andromache denies it was a marriage, 103) with her own marriage, which it destroyed. But still more, in her recollection of her ruptured marriage, Andromache here is quite specific in describing the mutilation of Hector's corpse by Achilles (107-8), whom she designates "the child of Thetis of the sea." The effect of these lines in part is to mark the peculiar difficulties of Andromache's position in the household of "the child of Achilles" and, in particular, as a suppliant of Thetis.

Recollection of the war's inception and its present consequences fills the first choral ode, as the chorus, with almost as much horror as Andromache herself (and they are Phthians, not Trojans), look to the beginning of the war in the judgement of Paris (274-309). The first strophic pair relates the judgement itself; the second is divided between regret for the possibility offered by the past for avoiding the war by killing Paris before he could initiate it, and all the suffering — on both sides — that might thus have been avoided (301-308). Their words join the sufferings of the Trojans with those of their Greek conquerors in a way that is suggestive of a new resolution to this archetypal struggle. Like Andromache, in this and subsequent recollections of Troy, the chorus both underlines the distance between Troy and the present

situation and traces the continuity between them. The chorus also gives expression in more general terms to the specific sorrow — and anger — that Peleus later will express at Achilles' death in the war. Achilles, issue of Thetis' union with Peleus, is kept before the audience in Andromache's memory of Hector's death at his hands,[27] by Peleus' briefly mentioned grief, and by his son Neoptolemus, who, though absent in fact, is present throughout in the words of those we see. Andromache introduces him initially as παῖς 'Αχιλλέως (21, 25), and must endure Hermione's taunts about sharing the bed of the son of the man who killed her husband (170-73). Achilles and the events of the Trojan War pervade the play; Andromache's references to Thetis and her marriage to Peleus are brief introductory allusions among numerous more direct references to the heroic antecedents of the drama. And yet, these introductory references, joined as they must be to the appearance of the goddess *ex machina* at the play's conclusion, are significant as providing an allusive frame for the drama and deserve particular attention in the evaluation of the secondary context of which they are a part.

Andromache's incessant recollection of the past makes her flight to Thetis' *temenos* appear somewhat incongruous, even ironic. This now-enslaved Trojan princess, who watched her husband killed by Achilles, seeks shelter at the shrine of Achilles' mother and depends on her for rescue from the plots of her son's ally Menelaus and his daughter. As in most suppliant dramas, the ritual of supplication is integrated into the drama by a narrative connection between the suppliant and the deity, but here the connection is a complex one with paradoxical implications for the struggle between the suppliant and her pursuers.[28] The apparent incongruity of Andromache's dependence on Thetis, however, is the first intimation of the restructuring of the conflict of the Trojan War that takes place throughout the tragedy. Andromache seems to rely wholly upon one who ought by all rights to be her enemy; the apparent futility of her appeal demonstrates her pathetic lack of other resources to turn to for help.[29] Andromache,

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[27] Note line 108 where in such a context he is named as παῖς ἁλίας Θέτιδος.

[28] It may recall the devotion of the slave Briseis to Achilles' interests (*Iliad* 19.282ff.).

[29] This should be compared to Creusa in the *Ion* taking refuge at the altar

however, seems wholly unaware of the incongruities in her act.[30] She comes to Thetis' shrine confident of the goddess' protection, just as she is confident that Neoptolemus, were he present, would defend her against the threats of Hermione and Menelaus (269). The incongruities are on the affective level only; legally, Andromache is Neoptolemus' chattel and so properly seeks refuge with a domestic god. On the level of ritual, too, she simply takes advantage of the refuge available at any sacred spot without reference to the identity of the suppliant or his relationship with the deity from whom he seeks protection.

Those who attack her, however, are themselves quite confident, each well aware that a slave without allies cannot in normal circumstances win. The conflict here derives from and refers back to the resolution of the Trojan War that made Greece victorious and Troy its slave. Andromache's status as slave is something of an issue with both Hermione and Menelaus. Hermione, obsessed with her own status in her husband's house, is eager to humble Andromache.[31] She addresses her first as δούλη καὶ δορίκτητος γυνή (155), pictures for her a future — if she is allowed to live — of obedience and menial labor, and declares in a peremptory fashion,

> γνῶναί θ' ἵν' εἶ γῆς. οὐ γάρ ἐσθ' Ἕκτωρ τάδε,
> οὐ Πρίαμος οὐδὲ χρυσός, ἀλλ' Ἑλλὰς πόλις.
>
> Know what land you are in. For Hector isn't here,
> Nor is Priam, nor his gold; instead, this is a Greek city.
> (168-9)

She is a slave, a prize of war, a barbarian, and Hermione resents in her the absence of the humility that would be a recognition of these indisputable facts and an acceptance of her own superiority.[32] Like Andromache, she too is obsessed with the distance Andromache has travelled from Troy and from her past there. Even Menelaus, when he has seduced her away from the protection of Thetis' shrine, sends her into the house, "so that as a slave you may never learn to act despitefully against the free" (ἵν' εἰς

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of the god against whom she profers accusations of profound irresponsibility; also perhaps to Priam's appeal to Achilles, *Iliad* 24.468ff.

30 Compare Ajax' use of Hektor's sword in Sophocles' *Ajax*.

31 See Lee 1975: 10.

32 Boulter 1966: 52ff; Vellacott 1975: 118; Burnett 1971: 134.

ἐλευθέρουςἰ δούλη γεγῶσα μήποθ' ὑβρίζειν μάθῃς. 433-4). There is a strong measure of self-definition in Hermione and Menelaus' treatment of Andromache. For both, her indisputable inferiority — because she is a barbarian, whose city was conquered by the Greeks, and is now a slave — is the proof of their own superior status. It is, in fact, the converse and complement of their own superiority, for they are Greeks, conquerors of her city, and now have power of life or death over her. The lines drawn in these initial confrontations with Andromache are very clear. The division is the same as that at Troy, but now, in the aftermath, the opponents no longer meet as equals; now the Greeks are masters and Andromache their slave. The recollections of Troy that fill the supplication scene of this drama gain cruel relevance in the encounters with Menelaus and his daughter.

The futility of her appeal to Thetis, the irony of the initial supplication tableau, seem bitterly apparent as Andromache is led off, presumably to her death. The conflict here seems to be resolved as it had been at Troy: Menelaus is victorious; Andromache, captured again. But then, unexpectedly, help does come for her, and it comes from those she had depended on for it, from the family of Achilles. Peleus, furious at the presumption of Menelaus that would put to death one of his grandson's slaves, confronts the hero and defeats his attempt to take Andromache. In his rebuke he reiterates the criticisms first voiced by Andromache, condemning Menelaus' responsibility for the Trojan War, enumerating his wife's unchastity, his decision to sacrifice countless Greek lives for the sake of this most unworthy woman, the sacrifice of Iphigenia, Achilles' death, and finally Menelaus' own cowardice. Peleus confronting Menelaus resembles Andromache in her earlier confrontations with the hero and his daughter. He is weak and crippled with age, as Andromache is by her gender and status, yet now Peleus defeats Menelaus with his moral fervor. The Greek hero retreats without a thought for his daughter, routed by the aged king.

But his retreat is less surprising, perhaps, than Peleus' apparent championing of Andromache's cause. Ignoring the distinctions of status that are so important to Hermione and Menelaus, Peleus rages about issues that are important to him, about the Trojan War and the son he lost fighting in Menelaus' cause, and finds himself strangely joined with Andromache in the loss suffered by

each from the war. In his charges against Menelaus he repudiates the war, denying the value of the conflict and the validity of the status Menelaus and, by extension, Hermione, have derived from it. In his attack the divisions at Troy are redrawn; the distinction between those who won the war and those who lost, between Greek and barbarian, between nobleman and slave is abandoned here in favor of a moral division between those who show themselves to be truly noble — and they are the ones who in some form or other lost at Troy — and those, the victors, who demonstrate that they are not.[33]

Andromache faces Hermione across this new division and Peleus joins the Trojan slave in confronting Menelaus across it. To these matched pairs is added a third set of opponents in the next movement of the drama. Hermione, leaving the palace to express her new-found fear of her husband's retribution for all she has done in his absence, is delighted to discover Orestes lurking about the palace. He has come, he tells her, to learn if she is well and happy in her marriage, but he reveals as they talk that he actually has come to claim her for himself, having already made arrangements for the murder of her husband.[34] The chilling way in which he delivers this news, his cocky, self-satisfied tone, marks Orestes as a man even more ignoble than Menelaus.[35] And he is shown to be so, by contrast with Neoptolemus, in the account of the death of Achilles' son that is brought by a messenger.

Orestes had bragged of the trap that he had set for Neoptolemus, of the clever defeat of his long-time opponent. But though Orestes is successful in murdering Neoptolemus and stealing his wife, Neoptolemus shows himself in this last battle a hero very like his father. He does not fight on a battlefield, nor does he face a heroic foe, but he confronts the rabble that attacks him heroically, routing them until they scatter like doves before a hawk (1140-41). It is an image that recalls the simile used in the *Iliad* of Achilles' pursuit of Hector (22.139-142), and is present here to recall the

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[33] Vellacott 1975: 33-36, wrongly I think, finds Peleus a caricature and diminishes his importance in this encounter.

[34] The relative chronology of Orestes' appearance in Phthia, Neoptolemos' death at Delphi and the arrival of the messenger in Phthia to announce it is discussed and dismissed as a problem by Grube 1941: 211, n. 2; see also Burnett 1971: 148-9 and n. 15.

[35] Burnett 1971: 147.

relationship of son to father and to assert the heroism of Neoptolemus.[36] His death, too, marks him as a hero, for it comes about like the death of Patroclus or that of Hector, possible only with the intervention of a god.[37] The exciting account of Neoptolemus' defense of himself and his death completes the final pairing of opposites across the moral divisions drawn in the play. Neoptolemus joins Andromache and Peleus in a realignment that effectively alters the outcome of the war. This realignment is fully established only when Thetis appears to Peleus and makes arrangements for the future.[38]

Her appearance at the end answers the references to her at the beginning in Andromache's introductory descriptions of the play's cult setting and reconciles the events of the drama to its context in the Trojan War. She ignores Menelaus, Hermione and Orestes in her speech; her concern, as she addresses Peleus, is with his family — and hers, through marriage. Neoptolemus' body Peleus is to take to Delphi for burial, to be a Δελφοῖς ὄνειδος (1241). His successor, the heir to the house of Aeacus, is to be the child of Andromache. Through this child, conceived in the forced union of the captive wife of Hector with the son of Hector's slayer, the line of Achilles will survive — together with that of Troy. This merging of the races has the effect of blurring the distinction, so important to Hermione and Menelaus, between those who won at Troy and those who lost. The relationship of victor and vanquished is altered as the two become merged in a new

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36 Burnett 1971: 151, however, sees such heroic behavior as the source of his impiety in his previous attack on Delphi. See next note.

37 There is a tendency among critics to view the dramatic events of the *Andromache* too much in the light of the narrated events at Delphi, e.g. Burnett 1971: 150-3 (See the partial response to Burnett in de Jong 1990: 161.); I am in agreement with the revision of Burnett offered by Lee 1975: 6. Grube 1941: 213 asks, "Would not a dramatist whose aim was to rouse our indignation against the god have made it his business to engage our sympathy for his victim?" In a recent article, de Jong 1990: 1-21 amply demonstrates that Neoptolemus's death is narrated in such a way as to "move the spectators," although she resists the conclusion that the emotional effect of his death makes this off-stage character the center of the play's meaning.

38 "Her epiphany is one of the easiest in Euripides. She is the natural person to round off the story, and her presence makes us see the life of Peleus in perspective, his good as well as his bad fortune. Apart from the consolation she gives, her speech is almost purely aetiological," Grube 1941: 212; Webster 1967: 70 limits her function to announcing the cult; Rabinowitz 1984: 121 sees Thetis present "as an ordering principle."

and peaceable relationship. The tragedy which began with Andromache's desperate appeal at the *temenos* of Thetis, ends with Thetis restoring to the slave woman the outward signs of her nobility, even as the war that had its beginning in the wedding of Peleus and Thetis ends here as the two are reunited.

It is an essentially optimistic conclusion that Euripides has here appended to the traditional stories of the heroic struggle at Troy. But as a story that marks the transition between the heroism of Troy and the reality of the recognizable world, it harbors a measure of sorrow for the passing of the heroic from the known world. If the play begins with the unedifying spectacle of the unheroic hero Menelaus, it ends with Andromache abandoned to a world from which all heroism has been withdrawn.

The necessity, common to suppliant dramas, of locating the action before a temple or altar, is transformed in the *Andromache* into a means of introducing into the drama concerns outside of the dramatic action but central to the poet's interest. Thetis, present both in her cult and in her role as the wife of Peleus (and so, grandmother of Neoptolemus[39]), has particular value for Euripides' story because of her place in the traditions surrounding the Trojan War. The introduction of Thetis through her cult and the linking of her with Peleus provokes a range of associations that constitute a secondary field of ideas for the play, a context in which the actual events of the play gain further meaning.

The Heracles

In the *Heracles*, Euripides has exploited the same potential offered by the setting of the initial supplication scene, but has used it not, as in the *Andromache*, to establish a secondary locale important for the thematic concerns of the work, but to introduce and define the antinomy essential to Heracles' nature and to his tragedy.[40] The

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[39] Burnett 1971: 138.

[40] This play is interesting for the lively critical debate it has provoked and for the extraordinary diversity of approaches to it. These Bond 1981: xvii-xxvi summarizes. In what follows I have adopted for the most part the interpretation of Gregory 1977: 259-75. I differ from Gregory primarily in seeing Herakles' final choice as heralded in the opening supplication action and not as a possibility emerging only as the play progresses. Ruck 1976: 53-75, discussing the same duality in the play, is less convincing.

Heracles takes place before the hero's palace in Thebes,[41] now in the hands of the tyrant and usurper Lycus; the dramatic action is focused on the altar of Zeus Soter.[42] When the play opens, the children of Heracles, his wife Megara, and Amphitryon cluster about the altar in flight from Lycus. Because Heracles is away on his most dangerous mission (to the underworld) they are defenseless against the threats of the tyrants and have put themselves under the protection of Zeus by attaching themselves to his altar.

The supplication and its failure fill the first episode of the drama and, as Heracles is absent but expected throughout, serve in a number of ways to define the hero and introduce him before he appears.[43] He is known through his family's need of him, Megara's self-conscious dignity as his wife, and Amphitryon's defense of his reputation.[44] But he gains clearest definition in the supplication itself, which becomes in Amphitryon's words the ultimate contest between Heracles' Olympian father and Amphitryon, the man who has acted as his father throughout his life. The emulous relationship Amphitryon has with Zeus, enacted here in the failed supplication, is used by Euripides as a visible expression and anticipation of the struggle Heracles himself will find in confronting the dual potential of his nature. And, just as it is Amphitryon, his human father, who, despite the limitations imposed by his age, keeps faith with Heracles, it is his own humanity that Heracles is forced to affirm as the source of his heroism at the play's conclusion.

Amphitryon, who speaks the prologue, introduces himself and the play by recalling his peculiar joint paternity with Zeus of Heracles:

> Τίς τὸν Διὸς σύλλεκτρον οὐκ οἶδεν βροτῶν,
> Ἀργεῖον Ἀμφιτρύων', ὃν Ἀλκαῖός ποτε
> ἔτιχθ' ὁ Περσέως, πατέρα τόνδ' Ἡρακλέους;

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[41] Wohlberg 1968: 149-55 briefly discusses the thematic function of the palace setting.

[42] Kopperschmidt 1971: 339-43.

[43] Gregory 1977: 261; Burnett 1971: 159ff. strangely sees the focus not on Herakles but on Amphitryon and Megara. She regards their lack of faith, which impels them to leave the altar, as the cause of the subsequent slaughter; for criticism of this view see Knox's review 1972: 270-9.

[44] See the discussion by Kamerbeek 1966: 6-8 and his reference there to Chalk 1962: 14, n. 33.

Who of mortals does not know the man who shared his mate with
Zeus, Argive Amphitryon, whom Alcaeus, Perseus' son
once engendered, who is himself the father of Heracles
(1-3)

This clearly emulous relationship that Amphitryon pursues with Zeus[45] makes his supplication at the god's altar at least as ironic as Andromache's appeal to Thetis or Creusa's to Apollo; yet it is an irony that is exploited here with a bitterness that is absent in either of these plays. Amphitryon explains in his introductory monologue the circumstances that have brought him, along with Heracles' family, as suppliants to Zeus' altar. He was entrusted with Heracles' family when the hero left to perform the labors that would win from Eurytheus Amphitryon's old lands (44-6); the responsibility for them lies with him, not Zeus. But old age, that sign of mortality distinguishing man from god,[46] makes him powerless against the tyrant Lycus and, in what must be a bitter capitulation, he yields his responsibility to the greater power of Zeus.

Both Heracles' claim on Zeus as his son and the more general claims of suppliants on the deity to whom they appeal encourage Amphitryon's expectations of rescue. His expectations are perhaps justified still further by the brief aition he offers of the altar where they cower:

βωμὸν καθίζω τόνδε σωτῆρος Διός,
ὃν καλλινίκου δορὸς ἄγαλμ' ἱδρύσατο
Μινύας κρατήσας οὑμὸς εὐγενὴς τόκος.

I sit at this altar of the saviour Zeus,
which as a monument of his conquering spear,
when he had overcome the Minyans,
my nobly-born son erected. (48-50)

Heracles' act of dedicating the altar is suggestive of the piety that Lyssa later will adduce in defense of Heracles against the aggressions of Hera (851-4). But here, at the beginning of the tragedy, it simply underscores the appropriateness of Heracles' family taking refuge at this altar. It resembles the recollections of prior service to the gods that are commonly introduced into prayers,

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45 Gregory 1977: 261-2.

46 The chorus emphasizes this expression of mortality (436ff); Gregory 1977: 263 finds different meaning in these lines.

apparently in an attempt to persuade the deity to favor the petition in return. The appeal of Amphitryon and his charges to Zeus by this aition is shown to be further justified by the pious service of Heracles to the god.

There is every reason for these suppliants to be successful in their plea.[47] Yet Lycus appears and, in Heracles' absence, threatens a death that seems inevitable. After consultation with Megara, Amphitryon and Heracles' family leave the protection of Zeus' altar so that they may die with the dignity appropriate to the family of a hero. But as he faces death, Amphitryon rebukes Zeus for his betrayal of his son's family:

ὦ Ζεῦ, μάτην ἄρ' ὁμόγαμόν σ' ἐκτησάμην,
μάτην δὲ παιδὸς κοινεῶν' ἐκλῄιζομεν·
σὺ δ' ἦσθ' ἄρ' ἧσσον ἢ 'δόκεις εἶναι φίλος.
ἀρετῆι σε νικῶ θνητὸς ὢν θεὸν μέγαν·
παῖδας γὰρ οὐ προύδωκα τοὺς Ἡρακλέους.
σὺ δ' ἐς μὲν εὐνὰς κρύφιος ἠπίστω μολεῖν,
τἀλλότρια λέκτρα δόντος οὐδενὸς λαβών,
σῴζειν δὲ τοὺς σοὺς οὐκ ἐπίστασαι φίλους.
ἀμαθής τις εἶ θεὸς ἢ δίκαιος οὐκ ἔφυς.

Zeus, it was for nothing then that you shared my wife,
for nothing did we call you a partner in our child;
you are less close to us than you give the illusion of being.
In nobility I beat you, though I am a mortal and you a great god;
For I did not betray the children of Heracles.
You knew well enough how to come in secret into my bed,
taking what no one gave, another man's pleasure,
yet you do not know how to save your own kin.
You are some sort of an ignorant god or you were not born just.
(339-47)

He sneers at the god's evident denial of his own paternity in his refusal to help these suppliants and vaunts his own greater, if less effectual efforts on Heracles' behalf.[48] And his complaint gains force by being addressed to the altar. The altar stands as the focus of Euripides' contemplation of divine-human relations which occupies the play's first half. The affective connection that invites Zeus' interest in the suppliants, Heracles' descent from Zeus, as well as the religious connection, Heracles' pious dedication of the altar to the god, is given voice by Amphitryon and vivid

[47] Gould 1973: 83.
[48] Bond 1981: ad 339-47 and references there.

poignancy in the supplication action. The failed supplication at Zeus' altar enacts a challenge to a pious view of divine justice, which will be overturned initially by Heracles' arrival and rescue of his family, but confirmed when Iris and Lyssa intervene to compel the slaughter of his family. Amphitryon's profound repudiation of Zeus and his defiant stand in the face of useless and unearned death look toward Heracles' own response at play's end to the slaughter of his family in the final affirmation of his own essential humanity. And just as rescue did not come to Amphitryon and his charges from Zeus, so for Heracles, intent upon suicide, rescue will come from a fellow human being. The power of the suppliant action in this play lies in its ability to delineate the lines of obligation and gratitude that are regularly thought to inform divine-human relations, and so make possible the interrogation of those relations.

Euripides' Suppliant Women

In the *Suppliant Women* Euripides once again uses the cult setting of supplication to introduce and emphasize themes that add resonance to the story. This tragedy, in which the mothers of the Seven heroes slain at Thebes appeal to Theseus and Athens to win back for them the bodies of their sons, takes place before the temple of Demeter at Eleusis.[49] Peculiar for Euripides' use of setting here is the absence of any traditional connection between the suppliants and the deity at whose temple they pursue their cause. But it is Euripides himself who suggests another sort of connection between these by shaping this traditional patriotic story of the appeal to Theseus and Athens to effect the return of the Argive dead[50] on the pattern of Demeter's sorrowful quest to regain her child, Persephone, snatched by Hades.[51]

The locale of Euripides' dramatization of this traditional patriotic story is the same as that used by Aeschylus in the

[49] Collard 1975: II, 104.

[50] See Zuntz 1955: 3-5, and his assertion, "*The Suppliant Women* is not an allegory on current affairs, but, in its own right, the self-contained reshaping of an Attic myth;" also see Collard's discussion 1975: I, pp. 3-8, esp. 4-5 and references there; also, Loreaux 1986: 107-9.

[51] Thus I would add this allusion inherent in the play's setting to those "themes, imagery, and symbols through which the audience is invited to view the meaning of the incidents in terms of the whole," (W. Smith 1966: 152). See also Bruno Lavagnini 1947: 82-6.

Eleusinoi.[52] The older tragedian's choice of this locale, to judge from Plutarch,[53] was motivated, at least in part, by the tradition that had the Seven buried at Eleusis. As Zuntz points out, that their ashes were not carried back to Argos in Aeschylus' play dispenses with the dramatic justification for the mothers given in Euripides' play and suggests that Adrastus alone presented the Argive appeal to the Athenians.[54] For Euripides, however, the appeal is intimately involved with the supplication of the mothers and the sympathetic, indeed, empathetic support offered them by Aithra, mother of Theseus.

Aithra is almost certainly another original addition to Euripides' play.[55] The place Euripides has given to the Attic queen in his drama is quite prominent. It is Aithra who in sympathy with the suppliants sends for her son Theseus from Athens, initiating the dramatic agon that occupies the play's first half. And it is she who, in convincing him of his duty to give them the assistance they need, resolves this conflict in a way that brings to Theseus and to Athens their inevitable glory. Adrastus' appeal fails when Theseus unyieldingly demonstrates that the Argive king has brought this disaster on himself and his people and can justify no appeal for help from Athens. But Aithra's appeal, made at the urging of the mothers, who see in her relationship with Theseus the only hope for recovering their own sons, succeeds. Though her arguments are based not upon her maternity, but upon concern for her son's reputation and — linked closely to his — that of the city, the king accepts her words with a dutiful humility that provides a striking contrast to his previous words to Adrastus.[56] Her role as mediator is appropriate. As the mother of Theseus, she is responsive to the sorrows of the suppliant women who have lost their sons. Her relationship with Theseus stands as a still viable example of the relationship which, insofar as it is possible, the

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[52] Collard 1975: I, p. 4.

[53] *Theseus* 29.5

[54] Zuntz 1955: 24, n.1; see Vellacott 1954: 116-7.

[55] Collard 1975: I, p. 5, n. 11. Her presence in the beginning of the play is unexpected, and Euripides has taken care to justify it in her opening monologue. She is present at Demeter's temple, she explains, for the celebration of the what must be the Proerosia (28-31), a festival appropriate to the encomiastic motive of the drama as one that required the attendance of Attic allies on the mother city. See Parke 1977: 72-5; Mylonas 1961: 7.

[56] Zuntz 1955: 7-11.

mothers of the Seven wish to restore with their sons through appropriate death rites.[57]

In the structure he has given to this story, Euripides has made the crisis and resolution of the *Suppliant Women* arise out of the relationship of mother with child. In doing so he gains pathos, certainly, while perhaps also suggesting the commonplace parallel between this relationship and that of the city and her son-citizens. Consistent with this central organizing relationship of the tragedy is the story of Demeter and her quest for her child whom Hades had taken, a story that is never alluded to in the tragedy, but is implicit in the setting of the action.

The story of Demeter's sorrowing quest for Persephone was familiar then, as now, in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*.[58] This hymn relates how the goddess wandered over the earth searching for her child and came to find some solace at Eleusis, where the queen received her and gave to her her own child to care for. Discovered as a goddess, Demeter commanded the Eleusinians to build her a temple and there she taught them her mysteries, making Eleusis the seat of her power. The parallels are striking between this traditional story, offering an *aition* for the familiar Attic cult site that is the setting for this drama and the story Euripides has dramatized. The appeal of the Argive mothers as suppliants and of Aithra as their queenly advocate, elements added to the story by Euripides, seem intended to recall this foundation myth of the Eleusinian cult. Such a connection, no more than an allusion in Euripides' drama, does more than simply provide a mythic paradigm for the dramatic action. Through the implications of this story, the success of the Argive supplication is anticipated in the success of Demeter's quest. And Euripides is able to intimate a connection between the traditional encomiastic story he is dramatizing and the proud claims of the Athenians to the Mysteries.[59] The setting at Eleusis adds a traditional dimension otherwise absent in the play.

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[57] "The suppliants are in some way identifiable with the people they are supplicating, with Theseus and Aethra," Gamble 1970: 386ff.

[58] Richardson 1974; see also Mylonas 1942: 9-27.

[59] Richardson 1974: 7-9.

The Oedipus at Colonus

For Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, as for Euripides' much earlier *Supplices*, the suppliant action, though located outside the city proper (*OC* 14-5), reflects praise on Athens as a city that champions the rights of suppliants. And for both, Theseus stands as the mythic exemplar of Attic political virtue. But the nature of the suppliant action in the *Oedipus at Colonus* is markedly distinct from the pattern found elsewhere in tragedy, and this difference is reflected in the role of the Eumenides' grove in the play.[60] The sacred grove of the Eumenides, corresponding to the altar or temenos that is the visual and emotional focus of most suppliant dramas, is at once less central to the dramatic action of the *Oedipus at Colonus* and more crucial to its meaning. Oedipus, despite his evident physical vulnerability, does not depend on the grove for protection, though he does call upon the Eumenides as a suppliant; what he seeks is not defense from some enemy, but help in finding the end to his life promised by the oracle. He easily accedes to the Colonians' request and leaves his refuge to take up a position outside the grove. Even the threats of Creon do not return him to the protective grove. And it is only after these physical threats are diffused by the intervention of Theseus that Oedipus finds the fufillment of his supplication: the end of his suffering has been granted him and the Eumenides' grove becomes his refuge in fact, as he reenters it to die. The sacred grove in this suppliant action has lost its importance as a place of protection for the vulnerable suppliant; it stands instead as the visible locus of those divine resources that mysteriously inhere in Oedipus.[61]

The power that so distinguishes Oedipus from more usual suppliants is confirmed in the oracles, in the anxiety of Creon and Polyneices to control their exiled kinsman, and ultimately in the strangely confident departure of this blind man. But it is defined also in the close association Sophocles establishes between Oedipus and the deities whose suppliant he declares himself to be. There is no justification in the mythic tradition for Oedipus' fate to be closely linked to the Eumenides, but Sophocles has been at some pains to establish a link by exploiting the usual affective

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60 Kopperschmidt 1971: 329-35; Burian 1971: 229ff.

61 Burian1971: 312, 1974: 408-10.

connection between suppliant and deity. The resolution that the gods will bring to this exile's troubled life will, as Sophocles has structured this tale, begin only from the resting place of these pacified goddesses of family ties. And in turn, these goddesses link Oedipus' fate to Colonus and Athens. The union of Oedipus and these goddesses, lacking in traditional implications, is given meaning that precipitates the play's action. It is not difficult to see a correlation between the vengeful *daimones* of family ties and the wandering exile: both in the end are given a home in Athenian Colonus and both will bring to that place a power that is indefinable but real. The connection may go further. Winnington-Ingram has argued most convincingly for a close intertextual connection between the Oedipus of this play and Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. This connection, he argues, explains the poet's representation of Oedipus' heroization through the confrontations that just precede it, for he, like they, will be a chthonic power who joins in his nature the contrary passions of vengeance and love.[62]

The significance of place to the *Oedipus at Colonus* should not, however, be limited to the cult locale of the Eumenides' grove.[63] More central to the patriotic and aetiological motives of the play are Colonus, the immediate geographic locale and Sophocles' own deme, and Athens, the backdrop to the action and to its enactment in the theater of Dionysus. Setting in this play has a peculiar and peculiarly priviledged status, as the playwright inverts the usual function of place to expand the signifying power of myth, and makes myth instead amplify the glory of these places.

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[62] Winnington-Ingram 1954: 16-24, 1980: 248-279 and Appendix C.

[63] Seale 1982: 113-143; Allison's discussion 1984: 67-91 of the importance of setting in the *OC* is especially good.

PART TWO

SPATIAL OPPOSITION AND THE ENACTMENTS OF TALES

CHAPTER FOUR

HERO, HOME AND WIFE

The detailed associations of a place, such as those developed by the poets for the cult settings of suppliant dramas, may be used to enhance the logical and imagistic systems of a work. But place in tragedy, as in the myths that form the basis of tragic plots, often functions to define more broadly the fundamental opposition of home and all that lies beyond its secure boundaries. Spatially expressing the dichotomy between self and other, this opposition of home and abroad has its roots both in psychological and practical reality. The home — and, by extension, the city — stands as a fundamental source and symbol of both identity and security: as a member of the social group defined by the house or city one is assured of a place within its walls and protection against the innumerable dangers that threaten from outside. The security of the home or the city is, in these stories, seen to be profoundly bound to the survival and identity of the individual.

But if the hero is in part identified with — and by — his home and home city, he gains definition as well from the adventures that necessarily take him from this place of identity out into a hostile and foreign world. As Propp has demonstrated in detail for Russian folktales, the narrative of the hero takes him from the home that is the initial source of his identity, out into a world of trial and conflict, and then home again, in a return that confirms his identity.[1] If dangers lie beyond the security of home, so too must adventure, and both the necessity for a hero to defend his home and the opportunity for him to prove his mettle and gain glory draw the hero forth from his home and city. Venturing outside of the home is a necessity, but at the end of these adventures and standing as their ultimate goal and measure of success

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[1] Functions XI (Departure) and XX (Return) in Propp's scheme of "functions." Note that after the hero's return home follows tests (XXV, XXVI), recognition of the hero's identity (XXVII); the hero's tale concludes with the hero's acquisition of both bride and kingdom (XXXI). Propp 1984: Chapter Three.

is the return home.[2] Hence it is that place, and, in particular, this complementary opposition between home and what lies beyond it, regularly participate in the construction of the character of the hero in Greek myth and literature.

The construction of heroism through the movement from home to realms of danger and back again is enriched and made complicated by the pervasive gendering of these spaces in Greek traditional tales. The opposition of home to threatening externalities, of interior space to exterior, is regularly echoed and reinforced by the opposition of female to male. While the hero, identified with his ancestral home and home city, leaves this enclosed space of security to defend it or, simply, struggles to return to it, this crucial place in the landscape of the hero's self is in these traditional stories represented by the hero's woman. To the female in these traditional tales belong the interior spaces; the store rooms, workrooms, bedroom, and of course, the womb, are her domain. From these, using what is brought from outside by the male, she produces for the house its heirs and many of the resources that enrich it.[3] And in protection of the female, the interior female space, and its offspring and products that are his, the male confronts the dangers of the world outside to prevent intrusion and theft. The identification of the female with the interior places of the house and city and the association of this complex with the heroic identity of the male is basic to the traditional tales used by the poets.[4] The hero's wife is used by poets to give voice to

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[2] Odysseus' story is the clearest example of this pattern in the tradition, but the pattern is implicit in the *nostoi* of all the Greek heroes from Troy. Even Achilles' fate demonstrates the powerful tension between the heroic venturing forth and the return home, as the glory of his deeds is limited only by the denial of his return home.

[3] There is a decided association between the woman and domestic spaces, which begins obviously with her real function and confinement in that space and extends to a less obvious association of the protected female body with the defended city. Michael Gagarin's remarks 1976: 89-91 on the status of free-born women at Athens and their place specifically in the *Oresteia* are useful in this context. For a different reading of the relationship of the female to the opposed interior and exterior spaces enacted in Greek tragedy, see Zeitlin 1990: 75-78. I am fundamentally in agreement with Zeitlin's position in that article, that in tragedy, the female character's "demand for identity and self-esteem are ... designed primarily for exploring the male project of selfhood" (69).

[4] Vernant 1963: 12-50; for a discussion of the city-hearth, see Gernet 1968: 322-39.

the locus of heroic identity and, together, woman and house serve as a double mechanism for describing the integrity or dissolution of the hero's identity.[5] The intrusion of the suitors into Odysseus' home, which threatens both the wealth of his household and the sexual integrity of his wife, is predicated on their assumption that the absent hero has suffered that ultimate dissolution of identity, death. The death of Hector is said, and comes in fact, to signalize the destruction of his home and the necessity of his wife "to serve another man's bed." And for Agamemnon, it is the sexual betrayal of his wife that makes his home no longer a place of security and his return home inevitable death.

This spatial opposition and its gendering is not new for tragedy; it is evident in the Homeric poems and in the heroic tales treated in much of Greek poetry before the fifth century. The tragedians, in adopting the traditional tales for their poetry, necessarily accepted also this complex of associations defining the hero. But the spatial opposition crucial to the hero's tale is significantly altered when that tale is made the basis of tragedy. For epic, the spatial division inherent in stories of this sort poses no difficulty to the singer's presentation: Homer may divide his narrative between Odysseus on his voyage from Troy and events at Ithaca, making each as vividly real in his narrative. In tragedy, however, it is less easy to shift the focus of the work between different places. Performance necessitates an inequality between the events enacted on the stage and those subordinated to them in narration, between the locale of the dramatic action and that of the secondary, off-stage events. The enacted events may be said to have a vividness denied events that are merely described.[6] And so in tragedy, the heroic opposition of home and threatening externalities is altered, the two necessarily made unequal, by the dramatic form itself.

The space of the dramatic action is defined, whether as a

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[5] The relationship of house and wife in Greek traditional tales is fundamentally metonymic, or, to use the language of semiotics, as mutually signifying: each the other's signifier, each the other's signified. And together this wife-house sign is the signifier of that secondary sign, the hero. The displacement of wife from house, then, constitutes a dissolution of the hero's self.

[6] But see Aristotle, whose remarks on ὄψις (*Poetics* 53b1-8) seem to deny the importance of such distinctions. On this see also Winnington-Ingram 1983: 78-88.

foreign place or as "home," by the movement of the actors and chorus and, to some unknown extent, by visible properties and scene-painting; it will also be defined in the words of the drama.[7] Events beyond the view of the audience or contained within and obscured by the *skene*, however, must rely wholly on narrative. Thus three distinct spaces are joined in the action and words of the drama: beyond the acting area, beginning in the imagined space beyond the sight of the audience, lie distant places from which come characters or reports of events to impinge upon the action. And behind the *skene* are the interior spaces equally hidden from view. Just as by convention the female must be represented in the theater by a male in disguise, so also must interior scenes be played outside in the public space of the theater. Between these unseen, verbally defined spaces of the drama lies the physical acting area visible to the audience.

It is up to the tragedian to decide how to dispose of the fictive places of the drama in the physical space of the theater. But perhaps simply for practical reasons, it is common for the acting area to be made to represent a public area in front of a palace or temple. The audience may be told it sees before it the city of Thebes, or that of Troy; the hero's home or his place of exile; or, as in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* or the *Oedipus at Colonus*, whether a place be home or not for the hero may itself be at the heart of the tragedy.[8] But wherever in the world of traditional myth the drama may be located, that fictive space necessarily intersects with the actual civic space of Athens and the Athenian audience. The tragedians reflect an awareness of this intersection and a willingness to emphasize it in their usual association of the public space of the theater with a similarly public fictive place.

The transposition of interior to exterior, like the recreation of faraway events in narrative and the representation of the female through disguised males, may be necessary to the tragic stage in a practical sense, but it must also have the effect of transgressing in dramatic representation the opposition of these categories that, through a sort of complementarity, prove essential to the definition of the hero. If the visible representation of action and space in

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[7] Ruth Padel 1990: 341-6.

[8] Sophocles works explicit instructions into the prologues of *Electra* (4-9), *Philoctetes* (1-2), *Oedipus at Colonus* (14-5, 24), when he has one character describe the place to another. See also Menander in the *Dyscolus* (1).

the theater has the effect of erasing the boundaries between these spatial and psychological categories, the playwrights regularly invite the imaginative collusion of the audience in recreating the necessary opposition of male and female, interior and exterior, home and abroad, through the verbal shaping they give to the world of tragedy.

In what follows I turn from consideration of the descriptive details of dramatic setting to evaluate some of the ways in which the tragedians exploit the broad spatial oppositions inherent in the traditional narratives and use the disposition of space in the performance text to redirect the narrative. Of particular interest is the structured tension between the visible locus of the dramatic action and events made to impinge upon it either from beyond the visible scene or from within the *skene*. Exile dramas provide good examples of such spatial oppositions and these will be discussed in the following two chapters. But first I look briefly at a few plays in which the spatial opposition of interior to exterior reinforces and is given voice in a struggle between male and female which threatens ultimately the integrity and survival of the male protagonist.

The Seven Against Thebes

In Aeschylus' *Seven* the opposition—and connection—between interior and exterior space is crucial to the play's structure and to its meaning. The usual pattern, seen in the *Iliad*, of a city besieged by a foreign foe is complicated in this tale by the mutual and mutually exclusive claim of the two brothers for a single city. Both claim Thebes as home: we see Eteocles, who presently holds the city, within the city preparing its defenses, and we hear of Polyneices, outside the city with an Argive army, preparing to attack. The action takes place within the city and yet the attention of all who are within the city—as that of the Athenian audience—is directed to the army that is massing outside the walls and to the battle that will be fought there.[9] In the fiction of the drama, it is the wall that bounds these spaces, defining the contested space of the city, separating aggressor from defender, brother from brother, and it is the gates that join them. For the audience, the

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[9] Gagarin 1976: 120-7, Thalmann 1978: 39-42, Bacon 1964: 28-31.

imaginative landscape of the drama is similarly divided, but the walls and the gates, which define the opposed spaces of this play, exist only in the words of the drama. They stand at the edge of the imagined space of the drama, just beyond the visible region of the enacted events.

Through the incessant focus on the city's walls and its gates Aeschylus has given powerful expression to what joins the brothers — and makes them mutually destructive.[10] Interior and exterior, closely linked in the parallel claims of the brothers, are linked in Aeschylus' drama in the descriptions of the messengers, in the commands of Eteocles, and, most of all, in the fearful outbursts of the chorus, which represents the young women of Thebes.[11] All attention is directed to the battle that threatens outside the walls, but it is the events inside the city that are given vividness in dramatic action. Indeed, the two fields are fundamentally linked in Aeschylus' dramatization of this traditional tale, for the combat of Eteocles and Polyneices, the battle for Thebes, is given shape on the tragic stage initially in the preparations of the city's men for its defense, but incessantly in the response of the city's women.

The men look outward, with a practical concern for the forces massing against the city and the steps necessary to combat them. Eteocles' speech, which begins the play (1-38), looks to his brother's efforts outside the city and calls on the citizens of Thebes to join him in the city's defense. Complementing his speech and giving its appeal greater urgency is the news from the walls brought by the messenger (39-68). Eteocles and the messenger will continue to function with this sort of complementarity, the plans of the one shaped by the reports of the other, until the warrior leaves to oppose his brother at the city's seventh gate. But there is another voice in this play that disturbs, and gives greater definition to, the practical efforts of the men to defend their city. The women of Thebes and, in particular, that most vulnerable

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[10] Zeitlin 1986 argues that Thebes itself is concerned in the articulation of these concerns.

[11] The play begins with Eteokles addressing the citizens of Thebes; from this address and from the concluding call to arms, we must assume that this crowd is defined as male and is distinguished from the chorus. I assume that it is the Athenian audience that Eteokles addresses in the prologue, inviting them to identify with the inhabitants of this besieged city.

segment of the city's women, the unmarried women, are represented by the play's chorus. Events outside the city provoke in them terror and desperate pleas to the gods. If the messenger brings Eteocles specific accounts of the immediate danger that threatens outside the city, the city's women instead anticipate a more distant and more terrible outcome to the conflict. They imagine not just what is happening beyond the walls of their city; with a particularly macabre vividness, they look towards the city's defeat and the horror of their own captivity.

The women's cries, heard onstage, respond to — and, for Aeschylus' audience, replace — the noise of the battle outside the city (100, 103, 150 ff., 203 ff., 239 ff.,). They exclaim at the sound of the treading of feet and hooves, of the clanging of armor, the shrieking of axles, and in their cries teach the audience what they are to imagine of events beyond their view. What the audience cannot see, what is probably not even represented realistically through "sound-effects," is present in the words and emotions of the chorus.[12] Sounds here are given verbal shape by the city's women as Aeschylus uses the passionate songs of the chorus to bridge the spatial division of the play. The messenger's speeches, with their more systematic, less emotional (but not wholly unemotional) narrative accounts of events, have this function also, but there the connection to the epic strategy of linking the competing loci of the narrative is evident. One narrative is intruded into the larger narrative as a distinct, delimited account of events unknown by the speaker's audience. It is in his use of the chorus that Aeschylus reveals a strategy unique to drama for joining the primary dramatic locale with the necessarily unseen secondary setting. In the passionate exclamations of the chorus, their response to what they hear beyond the walls, the battle outside Thebes is joined to the terror within the city and these two loci are linked with a temporal immediacy lacking in the messenger narratives.

The city, bounded by walls, defended by men, is defined in the *Seven* by the vulnerability and fear of its women.[13] The entire narrative of the capture of a city is played out in their laments and

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12 Bers 1974: 52. The chorus' excitment is communicated also in the highly resolved dochmiacs of these lines.

13 Thalmann 1978: 102-104, Gagarin 1976: 124-5, 151-62.

prayers.[14] There is a natural opposition between these women, who are helpless to defend their city but wholly dependent on its fate, and the hero Eteocles, wholly responsible for the city's defense.[15] Most interesting perhaps is Eteocles efforts to silence the chorus, his diatribe against women, his dislike of their appeals to the gods (181-286; note especially 200-1). He is afraid that they will transmit their fear to the city's citizens, to its warriors, but his words contain a certain desperation, a suggestion that the women give voice not only to their own, but also to his fears.[16]

What the women fear most, the destruction of the city, does not of course come to pass. The city remains, and it is only to the two brothers themselves that their mutual claims on the city have proven mutually destructive. Accompanying the bodies of Polyneices and Eteocles when they are returned to the city and to the acting area are their sisters, Antigone and Ismene, who in themselves, as in their dirges, reconstitute their brothers who have fallen. Both brothers have now come home; the meaning of their journey and their homecoming is interpreted by their sisters, just as it was the women inside the city who previously interpreted the meaning of the men's battles before the city's gates. But the futility of their battle is apparent in the Herald's decree (1005 ff.), which once again assigns to Eteocles a secure place of burial — his lasting home — and denies such a place to his brother. In a reiteration of the brothers' conflict, Antigone rejects her uncle's decree and takes up Polyneices' cause, determined to give this brother too his place at Thebes.[17]

The narrative of a besieged city, reminiscent of the *Iliad*, is altered here by the over-determined family relationships that join aggressor and defender, as also by the transference of this story-pattern from epic narrative to dramatic enactment. But the spatial division between the interior of the city filled with women and the gods to whom they appeal and the men's battle outside the city is consistent with the use of space in the *Iliad*.[18] The men's con-

[14] Recalling the laments of the women in the *Iliad* (22. 405-515; cf. also 6. 406-65).

[15] Winnington-Ingram 1983: 27-9, Cameron 1971: 32-3.

[16] Gagarin 1976: 151-62, Zeitlin 1986: 110.

[17] For a discussion of the difficulties presented by the present ending of the *Septem*, see Thalmann 1978: 137-41 and references there.

[18] I think in particular of Book 6, where Hector returns to Troy and places within the city that are specific to women to encourage the women to

conflict, engrossing as it is in itself, is pursued with reference to the city, with attempts to breach its walls or to defend them,[19] and the women give voice to the city's protected resources and to its vulnerability. The tragedian, unlike the poet of epic, does not offer city-scenes merely to complement the battle scenes and enlarge upon their meaning; rather he has had to represent the battle through the dramatization of city scenes, to enact men's conflict through expressions of women's fear.

The Agamemnon

The cries of the women in the *Seven* fill the city's enclosed spaces and define its vulnerability to the violence that threatens at the city's gates. But in many works, the public space of the city—corresponding to the civic space of the Dionysiac theater—stands not simply in opposition to the dangers that threaten outside the city walls, but in opposition as well to the hidden interior of the palace or temple that is the standard backdrop for tragedy. Tragic performance and tragic convention necessitate the tragedians' choosing a single locus for the dramatic enactment. And regularly, though not always, it is the middle ground of the civic space that is chosen, bounded by threatening externalities on the one hand and by a dark interior on the other. Such a setting for the dramatic action, effecting an intersection between the fictive public place of the tragedy and the actual public place of the Dionysiac performance, may have invited the fuller involvement of the audience in the drama, much as the identification of the chorus with townspeople is thought to have done. But it certainly meant that the unseen but described events of the drama, those occuring beyond the city walls or within the palace interior, were understood in relation to the city and to the events enacted in that public place.[20] The public place of the drama becomes, when events threaten from outside the city as in the *Seven*, a refuge; but for events within the palace walls, it is the place of revelation.

For Agamemnon in Aeschylus' play, who makes his journey

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sacrifice to Athena, while Andromache, absent from her home, moves about in the public spaces of the city (6. 111-115).

19 This is as the pattern establishes it. It is all the more shocking then, when Achilles challenges these reasons (*Iliad* 9. 337-343).

20 Padel 1990: 343-6.

home after conquering Troy (for its transgression against the home, the stealing of Menelaus' wife), the city is again the locus of the dramatic action. Events take place before Agamemnon's palace, in a space defined as public by the chorus who represent Argive citizens and concern themselves with their city's, as their own, well-being. It is a space punctuated by arrivals and departures, a place linking the distant war at Troy with the dark secrets hidden within the House of Atreus. Initially, before turning to the dark interior of Agamemnon's house and the woman who holds sway there, the play looks outward from Argos to Troy, marking the distance between the two places and closing that distance through vivid imagination and description.[21] First it is the beacon that traces the distance between Troy and Argos and signals the closing of that distance as the heroes, and particularly Agamemnon, begin their return trip home. Then Clytemnestra provides a commentary of sorts on the meaning of the beacon, offering a vivid recreation of the beacon's journey across the distance separating Troy from Argos and of the Greeks' victory which it announces (281-316, 320-50). Her imaginative reconstruction is unconvincing to the citizen-chorus until the Herald arrives to confirm what the beacon — and the queen — have already announced: the Greek victory at Troy and the army's long-desired return home.[22] The Herald's own fervent delight at having gotten safely back (503-10), as well as his acknowledgement of those who did not return (568ff.), effectively measure the hard distance dividing the dangers at Troy from home. The spectacular entrance of Agamemnon, accompanied by the enslaved Cassandra, announces conclusively his success at Troy and his apparent success in spanning the distance to reach home safely.

With the king's arrival the focus of the tragedy shifts back to the city and to the palace. His opening words before the palace, before the city's older citizens, seek to place all that he has done at Troy in a public context. Dividing his speech between the city's gods and its citizens, he judiciously measures out thanks for divine help and offers a warning of a sort of civic audit that will

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[21] In the parados the chorus closes as well the temporal distance dividing the start of the war from its conclusion. Their focus on the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis, which anticipates Agamemnon's murder, implicitly denies the spatial separation of that place from Argos.

[22] Gagarin 1976: 93.

measure what is healthy in the city and what requires curing. Even his intention of entering his palace is expressed impersonally and justified by religious duty, not his own interest (851-4).

It is Clytemnestra, bringing outside her private claims on him, who strangely prevents him from immediately entering the house. Acknowledging the strangeness of her public declaration (856-7), she nevertheless rehearses a tale of her sufferings during Agamemnon's absence from home that is intended to demonstrate her close connection with his interests. It is, of course, a lying persona that she here constructs for herself and offers to the city and to her returned husband to see. But the lie cannot be discovered from the exterior she constructs; it will be made known to the returning king only when he finally enters his house. Recalling Penelope's account in the *Odyssey* of her torment in the long years before Odysseus' return, it has the effect of asserting Clytemnestra's fidelity to her husband and the security of the home to which he has returned. She forces Agamemnon to acknowledge her claim on him, her role in running the affairs of his house, when she commands the woven carpet to be spread for him to walk on (908-13). Their disagreement over the significance of Agamemnon treading on the weaving will come to reflect upon their disagreement over the significance of Agamemnon sacrificing Iphigenia, but overtly husband and wife argue here over other transgressions of the resources of the house.[23] And it has the visual effect of focusing attention on the returning hero's transition from the city to the private interior of his palace.

Standing as the unseen *locus* of the play that hides within its spaces — and within its past — secrets that the subsequent scenes will uncover and bring outside to the largely uncomprehending scrutiny of the citizen-chorus, the palace draws both Agamemnon and the audience inward. When Agamemnon enters the house, however, we, like Cassandra and the chorus, remain outside. The palace exterior hides from view all that it contains, but the interior scene becomes vivid in Clytemnestra's description of the commonplace gathering of the house's slaves sacrificing at the house altar (1035-9) and is transformed horribly in Cassandra's mantic

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[23] See John Jones' discussion 1962: 82-11 of the importance of this scene; also Oliver Taplin 1977: 459.

speech that follows. Her extraordinary vision illuminates events —past and present—within the house (1072-1330); making public what the house hides, she becomes the voice that the house was said, by the watchman, to lack (37). And when she too, pronouncing her own death and Agamemnon's, goes inside the palace, the truth of her vision reaches us still in the cries of the murdered Agamemnon (1343 ff.).

In the end, it is Clytemnestra who reveals what the house conceals, displaying the bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra, interpreting their deaths and making them a part of the narrative of the house. With a new account that parallels and corrects (1372-6) the false narrative she delivered on Agamemnon's arrival home (855-913), she asserts her own power to control the destiny of the house, distinct from Agamemnon's. Refusing the name of wife (1497-9), she assumes instead the role of an avenging spirit, justifying his murder as vengeance for the slaughter of Thyestes' children and for the murder of Iphigenia. In her words she joins her deed to the bloody history of the house, as she gives meaning to the slaughtered bodies exposed for the citizen-chorus—and the audience—to see. But her claim to speak for the house, to justify the new horrors it contains, is denied in the response of the chorus; it will definitively be set aside in the next play of the trilogy, when Agamemnon's son returns and presses his claim to the house of his father.

Agamemnon's homecoming is offered in the *Odyssey* as the archetype of the failed *nostos.* Supplanted in his home and his bed by his own cousin, Agamemnon returns to Argos to find the security of his home perverted and his own life threatened. Aeschylus has adopted the hero's unhappy tale from epic, but he has reshaped it in some significant particulars. The conflict between public and private justice is given expression in a number of ways, but certainly through spatial distinctions and the gendering of these spaces. The city is the locus of the dramatic action, the reference of all that happens both abroad in Troy and within the palace; it serves as a transitional ground, linking the exterior realm, the realm of the male justice imposed on Troy, to the interior region and the vengeance of the female on her husband. The correlation Aeschylus exploits between gender and space may account for his decision to have Clytemnestra and not Aegisthus, as in Homer, actually kill Agamemnon. Given form and

voice in the person of Clytemnestra, the perversion of the house as a place of security is the source of much of the play's emotional tension, and the predominant vehicle of the poet's thematic concerns.

Some Euripidean Uses of the Spatial Metaphor

Of course, the interior space concealed behind the *skene* is not always a place that hides danger for the male. In the *Alcestis*, where much of the attention of the early scenes is focused on the unseen interior of Admetus' house, events there confirm and describe the wife's devotion to her husband's interests that has made her volunteer to die so that he might live.[24] The close connection of the woman with the well-being of the hero and his home is central to the tale on which Euripides depends for this play. Admetus' crisis arises from the simultaneous necessity of his wife's death and of her survival for his own and his house's well-being. And Euripides has reinforced the associations of house and wife not just by his characterization of Alcestis as a woman wholly taken up with maternal and domestic concerns, or of Admetus as a man who cannot well exist in his own house without a woman, but through his disposition of the narrative throughout the spatial fields of the performance. The spatial assignments are, in some sense, quite conventional: the *skene* represents Admetus' house, the acting area a public space before it, and the space beyond view, foreign places from which Heracles arrives and from which he will return with Alcestis. But the playwright has made much of the attention of the play focus on the hidden events enclosed in Admetus' house and known to the chorus of Pherean citizens or to the audience only through description. Within the house is concealed Alcestis' sorrow, made known to the chorus and to the audience through a servant's narrative.[25] And, though the dying woman will emerge briefly to voice her own concerns for the family and house she leaves in death, she will return within to die. The house will conceal mourning for Alcestis so that Heracles will not know of it. And it will eventually accept the woman, silent and hidden in veils,

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[24] Luschnig's fine discussion of interior space in the *Alcestis* 1992: 19-34 was available too late for me to make use of it.
[25] De Jong 1991: 7 and 122.

whom Heracles returns to Admetus' house. The dilemma of Admetus, which is the focus of Euripides' play, gains dual expression in the enclosed house and the woman enclosed in veils which together are made to contain his life.

Euripides' use of the enclosed, interior of the house associated with the female in order to express a male dilemma is perhaps clearer in the *Hippolytus.* Euripides has opposed the concealed places of Theseus' palace to the wild spaces beyond the city and used the two, unseen in the theater and present in the tragedy only in action and words, to introduce and delineate the crisis Phaedra poses for Hippolytus.[26] The youth is first seen as he comes back from the hunt, from the wild places sacred to Artemis and dear to him (58 ff.); Phaedra is introduced soon after, demanding to be brought forth from within the palace where she has tried to imprison and conceal the god-imposed passion that afflicts her (176 ff.). Containment is for Phaedra equated to fidelity and good repute. But her passion has driven her to seek the out-of-doors, to dream even of hunting in the fields like Artemis or Hippolytus (208 ff.). Euripides has used the pull between the interior of Theseus' palace and the wild places of the hunt to express Phaedra's passion and her resistance to it. Its eventual exposure to the nurse and then to Hippolytus will drive the queen back to the interior of the palace, where in desperation for her good name and her children, she will take her own life and write the deceptive letter that will take Hippolytus'.

Hippolytus responds to the news of Phaedra's desire for him not by bolting for those pure Artemisian fields (though he does declare a need to clean his ears with running streams [653-4]), but with a diatribe against women (616-68). Inseparable in his condemnation is the reactionary chastity made to characterize this youth in Aphrodite's prologue speech and a more vehement anger against the infidelity Phaedra shows to his father. Hippolytus' identification with his father's interests here becomes significant as anticipating the mechanism Phaedra — or the goddess — will use to destroy him.

Phaedra, unfaithful to Theseus under a god's compulsion, becomes unfaithful in deed when she leaves as a suicide note a

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26 Saïd 1989: 132-5.

lying accusation against Hippolytus for rape. When Theseus returns home, he like Agamemnon, is puzzled by the greeting he is given (790 ff.), and he too will find concealed within his house a peculiarly feminine deception that will bring him destruction through his son. As with Clytemnestra, the sexually transgressive female, her transgression, literalized here in her demands to be brought outside of the house and her desire to go still further into the wild fields beyond the city, brings destruction on the male when he enters the enclosed spaces of his home.

Separated by more than twenty years from the *Hippolytus*, Euripides' *Bacchae*, too, exploits the conventional association of women and home/city to define the hero's self and the severing of that association to define the dissolution of his identity. The public space before the king's palace is again the locus of dramatic action, and again it is bounded by the somewhat mysterious interior of the palace enclosure, as by the wilds of Mount Cithaeron outside the city's walls.[27] The crisis of the drama, however, does not arise from a sexual transgression of the hero's wife, her welcoming into his home someone who will supplant him and require his death. Rather the *Bacchae* depends for much of its force on what might be called a spatial transgression, the departure of the women of Thebes from their homes and city out into the unbounded space of Mount Cithaeron.[28] And just as Clytemnestra's infidelity displaced Agamemnon, severing his connection with those crucial signifiers of the hero's self, the home and the woman, so the Theban women's departure from the city Pentheus claims as his own anticipates the dissolution of the hero's identity which will be given gruesome physical expression in the *sparagmos* of the play's conclusion.[29]

Dionysus, coming from abroad to claim his home, introduces into the city a band of Asiatic maenads who are this tragedy's chorus, even as he drives from their homes in the city the

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[27] Segal 1982: 78-86.

[28] Pentheus' assumption that the departure of the women from their homes is joined to a sexual betrayal of their husbands confirms the logical identity of spatial and sexual transgression in such tales and the significance of both for male self-definition.

[29] Discussion of gender is central to much of the criticism of this play; see in particular, Easterling 1987: 25-6.

Theban women. The inversion of women — foreign women in the city, Theban women outside its walls — is expressive of Pentheus' crisis when this home-born foreigner, a cousin and doublet of the king, comes to Thebes. The foreign women, occupying the central theatrical space, become the communal voice of the tragedy, which, both foreign and female, is distinctly at odds with the dominant voice of Pentheus.[30] The women of Thebes, removed from view until Agave's appearance at play's end, are given shape, other than in the lurid imaginings of Pentheus, only in the accounts of messengers. In these narratives they occupy the open spaces of Mt. Cithaeron, their activities marked not by sexual infidelity, as Pentheus imagines, but by their eerie union with nature (as demonstrated, for example, by their suckling of wild creatures [699-700]) and their hostility to men. Departure from the city, normally the perogative of men, here becomes the defining act of the city's women, who create in nature a community of exclusion which, when penetrated by the cowherds or Pentheus, acts together to destroy the intruder.

In such a landscape of displacement it is perhaps unsurprising that Pentheus' single place of security is the interior space of the palace, commonly associated with the female, but now emptied of all.[31] If the open spaces beyond the city are occupied by the city's women, and the city's own public places are filled with Dionysus' foreign votaries, Pentheus, when he initiates his battle against the Asiatic intruder, still believes that he holds securely his palace interior. In the palace Pentheus imprisons some of the bacchantes (226-7), and, too, the Asiatic stranger after their first colloquy (509-14).[32] But almost at once the stranger escapes from the palace to spar again with the king. It will be Pentheus next who enters the palace, under the compulsion of Dionysus' seductive suggestion that he don the dress of a maenad and go into the hills to spy on the Theban women. And the king's palace, when Pentheus enters, will prove to conceal just Pentheus himself, the woman enclosed within who will emerge bringing destruction to the

30 Foley 1985: 220-22.

31 Saïd 1989: 128-30 provides a good discussion of the palace within the play.

32 Pentheus imprisons him in the stables of the palace, an apparent attempt by the king to demean his captive; for the audience, it might also recall the animal associations of the god.

king. Perhaps in this play, more than any other, the playwright has found in the association of gender with space a clear way to externalize in the theater the crisis of the hero's self.

There is certainly nothing surprising in the plays surveyed here or in other plays about an association of female with home or of the two together with the identity or well-being of the male protagonist. But what is important for this discussion is a recognition of the crucial interdependence of gender and space in traditional narratives and the ways in which the dramatists made use of the related pair to give shape to the tragic protagonist or his dilemma in performance. The unseen interior, brought out into the theater in the playwrights' words, and the woman, brought before the audience by a man disguised, both conceal within themselves dangerous possibilities for the hero; for the playwright, however, they offer rich resources for their dramas.

CHAPTER FIVE

WOMEN, HOME AND EXILE

The spatial dichotomy that underlies the *Seven against Thebes*, *Agamemnon* and a number of later tragedies, is inherent also in works that treat the return of an exile. Such stories resemble the *nostos* theme that is basic to the *Odyssey* and to the definition of heroic success in other *nostoi* of the cycle more generally. But, while the *nostos* is fundamentally concerned with homecoming, the exile narrative, translated into drama, focuses on the place of exile and escape. In tragedies of exile, a person in a hostile place far from home finds a rescuer and a means of making his way home again. Concerned with the loss and restoration to one's home, such works bear some resemblance also to dramas of supplication. Expelled from home, stripped of the protection one's own city should offer, a suppliant is intent on finding some place else that will accept and protect him; for a suppliant it is a quest against odds for a new home, as in exile dramas it is a quest to return to one's home. The goal for both sorts of dramas is the winning of a place that one can claim as one's own.

The place one would escape from is opposed in both sorts of dramas to the home one seeks, and together these places bound the imaginative landscape of the works. Suppliant dramas, concerned with the winning of a safe haven, necessarily take place in the city where refuge is sought and have as a secondary locale the city that is the source of threat to the suppliant. For exile dramas the spatial orientation is reversed. Because these works are concerned with escape or rescue from the place of exile, they are located in this far-off place, but look homeward in the desires and efforts of the protagonist. The inherent identification of the specific place of exile and place of refuge with the broadly evocative places in the mental landscape, home and what threatens outside, wins for the tragic exile sympathy and a particular interest in his story. Such sympathy also comes from the vulnerability of the exile. Like the suppliant who has lost his city, the exile lacks the usual resources of home and family, and, as a

consequence, is profoundly defenseless[1] and unable himself to end his exile. He, or she, must be joined by a rescuer, generally someone from home, who is, or who brings the means of escape. And yet, in every example, the focus remains on the exile and his or her efforts, decision, contrivances to effect the return home.

Odysseus, stranded on Calypso's island, offers an epic model for the exile who cannot effect his own return, but must depend on others to initiate his homeward movement.[2] Athena has already won from Zeus the promise that Odysseus will be allowed to return home by the time that Odysseus himself appears in the poem, weeping on the shores of Calypso's island for the home he cannot reach. His tears, recalling those of Achilles in the *Iliad* (1.348 ff.), mark his inability to complete his return homeward. Without intervention from outside neither the narrative nor its hero could move on. But rescue comes from Hermes, who arrives to tell Calypso of the decision of Zeus and arrange for her compliance. For Odysseus, release from exile comes from Olympus; and yet, the hero must still reject explicitly the place he has been given by Calypso and construct his own conveyance out of that place. He takes the first step when Calypso, despite the commands from Olympus, tries one last time to persuade her reluctant companion to remain with her. This exchange demonstrates nicely the function of the place of exile to provide, by contrast, definition for the hero's home and for his self. She argues that if Odysseus will remain with her, his difficult journey is over and he will have dominion over her household, a beautiful wife, and immortality (*Odyssey* 5. 203 ff.). In his refusal, Odysseus acknowledges the superiority of all that she offers him over the life he covets on Ithaca, focusing in particular on the contrast between the goddess and his own wife.

> πότνα θεά, μή μοι τόδε χώεο· οἶδα καὶ αὐτὸς
> πάντα μάλ', οὕνεκα σεῖο περίφρων Πηνελόπεια
> εἶδος ἀκιδνοτέρη μέγεθός τ' εἰσάντα ἰδέσθαι·
> ἡ μὲν γὰρ βροτός ἐστι, σὺ δ' ἀθάνατος καὶ ἀγήρως.
> ἀλλὰ καὶ ὣς ἐθέλω καὶ ἐέλδομαι ἤματα πάντα
> οἴκαδέ τ' ἐλθέμεναι καὶ νόστιμον ἦμαρ ἰδέσθαι.

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[1] This defenselessness is carefully marked in some works, as in the *Prometheus Bound* where the protagonist because of his bonds cannot even ward off the rain; or in the *Philoctetes* where an attack of his disease may render him wholly vulnerable, despite the bow.

[2] Frame 1978: 34-80.

Lady goddess, do not be angry at me for this;
indeed I myself know all very well,
in what ways wise Penelope
is weaker than you in form and stature to look at her;
for she is a mortal, but you are immortal and unaging.
Nevertheless, even so I desire and hope everyday
to come home and see the day of my homecoming. (5.215-20)

For Odysseus, Penelope and Calypso are the opposing points that define his choice and his journey. In comparing Penelope to the goddess he acknowledges the superiority of what Calypso offers him, acknowledges the possibility of his own divinity, and in rejecting it firmly reasserts his own identity as a mortal delimited by age and death and defined by wife and home. With this Odysseus turns to the laborious task of constructing the vessel that will carry him out of the place of exile homeward to Penelope.

Three narrative components in Odysseus' escape from Calypso's island will recur, with variations, in the tragedies of exile: the possibility of escape is brought from outside by another (here, Hermes); the exile must reject the hospitality of his host and must construct his own means of departure. But in the extant tragedies the pattern of rescue or escape from exile is never simple. Prometheus, Philoctetes and even Oedipus in the *Coloneus* refuse their return home, although their desire to end their exile is vividly represented. The crisis in these tragedies becomes not simply escape from exile, but persuading the exile, disaffected from his community, to rejoin that community; these tragedies of male exiles are treated in the following chapter. The Euripidean exiles discussed below are problematic not because they are ambivalent towards release from exile, but because they are women and are themselves thus represented with a measure of ambivalence.[3]

The female exile presents a special case. The journey beyond the home with its inherent dangers culminating in the risk of a failed *nostos*, is a part of the narrative that defines in most tales the heroic identity of the male. Women regularly participate in this heroic narrative by reinforcing and articulating the secure boundaries of the hero's home and identity, or, as was apparent in the previous chapter, by transgressing those boundaries and in that way proving a danger to the hero. Thus the alienation of the

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[3] Zeitlin 1990: passim.

woman from the hero's home, her exile, is inherently threatening, an expression of his incomplete or failed *nostos*.

But if it is the hero's *nostos* that is, in part, at issue in these plays, it is the character of the exiled woman which excites the greatest attention, inviting sympathy with her vulnerability, misgivings with her guile. In *Iphigenia Taurica, Helen* and *Medea,* discussed below, escape from exile requires the woman to betray a man who has provided her with food and shelter and join her cause to that of another male. Her action, a simultaneous act of betrayal to one man and loyalty to another, is necessary if she is to claim her home, but it necessarily closes for her any possibility of return to her previous home. As such it is susceptible to interpretation as representing the transfer of a woman in marriage. The potential conflict inherent in this social and literary pattern underlies both the *Iphigenia Taurica* and *Helen,* discussed in what follows. These late works display a rather simple working out of the exile pattern which is easy to trace and makes apparent both the close connection of the woman's exile to the well-being of her man and the ambivalence with which the female exile is treated. It is for this reason that I have taken the two out of chronological order and treated them first. In these happier dramas the tragic possibilities of the ambiguous female or of her displacement from home are never fully developed, as they are in Euripides' earlier and darker *Medea,* which concludes my discussion of the female exile.

Two Unexpected Exiles: Iphigenia and Helen[4]

Helen and Iphigenia in Euripides' plays are both Greek women exiled in a foreign land distinctly hostile to Greeks; in the course of each drama the female protagonist is joined inadvertently in the place of exile by the man responsible for her — for Helen, it is Menelaus and for Iphigenia, her brother Orestes. The woman's escape from exile is inseparably joined to her male partner's *nostos.* And in both plays, because the weapons of the men have little

[4] Euripides' *Iphigenia Taurica* and *Helen* have such similar plots that scholars have long been confident that one should be read as an imitation of the other. In the present context, I am less concerned with the priority of either play than with the working-out of the exile motif in both. The *Helen* is firmly dated to 412 by two scholia on Aristophanes *Thesmophoria* (ad 1012 and 1060); whether the *IT* preceded or followed it is not known. See Platnauer 1938: xiv-xix and Dale 1967: xxiv-xxviii.

power against overwhelming foreign forces, it will take the guile of the woman to effect the escape of both. The coincidence of interests that joins Helen to Menelaus and Iphigenia to Orestes, necessary for their eventual escape and return home, make of both dramas cheerful romances. But central to both is the paradoxical — or at least uncomfortable — linkage of female deceit to female faithfulness. In the context of the characteristic use in Greek traditional tales of the female and the home to give form and voice to the stable identity of the male, the initial alienation of these women from home may be seen as an expression of their male partner's as yet incomplete homecoming; their faithfulness to his *nostos* as an anticipation of its success.

The women's exile in a land hostile to Greeks may also be read as giving expression to the peculiar sort of ambivalence with which female figures in Greek literature seem often to be represented. The women in these plays, like women in Greek life divided between birth-home and marriage-home, have an ambiguous spatial identity, potentially divided between two places, and for the happy ending to come about, each must reassert her loyalty to her home in Greece by effecting, through deceit, her own and her male partner's escape from the hostile foreign land. The allegiance of each woman to Greece and to her home in Greece is implicitly questioned when she is found potentially integrated into the foreign land. Each has as much reason to remain in the foreign land as to return to Greece: Iphigenia is a priestess who prepares Greeks for sacrifice; Helen may wed the king of Egypt. And of course, the anti-Greek orders in effect in each country do not apply to these women. Both plays do end happily, with man and woman acting in concert to effect their mutually satisfying homecomings. But in both, the linkage of female deceit to family loyalty problematizes female exile and suggests that in these tragedies the alienation of the woman in a land hostile to Greeks represents the troublingly ambiguous loyalties of the woman, who in Greek life as in Greek literature comes from outside to occupy the man's home.

The ambivalence that attaches to the woman exile is particularly marked in Iphigenia, whose loyalties are simultaneously joined to her brother and to the goddess she serves. Iphigenia has no ties to a husband, but, as though she were any unmarried Greek girl

who has lost her father, she is made in Euripides' play her brother's dependent. It is Orestes who will act in this exile narrative very much as Menelaus acts in the *Helen*. He represents to her the home that she longs to return to and his arrival will in fact precipitate her escape from exile.[5] And yet Iphigenia is defined further by a different, more substantial identity with the goddess who rescued her from death at Aulis and who has shaped her life as a priestess among the Taurians.[6] Iphigenia, with the goddess she serves, has an ambiguous status in this happy tragedy.[7] Like Artemis, Iphigenia is at once wrongly displaced in a foreign and hostile land and at the same time an effective force of that anti-Greek hostility. Orestes, on the orders of Artemis' brother-god, Apollo, acts to rescue his sister and the goddess from these barbaric, anti-Greek, practices, but the play never resolves the question of either the girl's or the goddess' complicity in the ritual killing of Greeks. And even when the priestess and the goddess' cult have been given a home in Attica, the foreign danger will remain implicit in the mandated ritual enactment of human sacrifice.[8] Iphigenia, with Artemis, will be brought home to Greece from exile, but her foreignness, the threat that she potentially poses to the society that gives her a place, will remain an essential part of her identity.

The goddess of the Taurians is represented by her priestess and the man-slaughtering ritual she is said to demand, but she is also present in the temple, represented by the *skene*, which is given some detailed description in the play. It is Iphigenia who in the prologue first alludes to the ritual practiced at Artemis' temple, describing it as "lovely in name alone" (35) and refusing to mention anything further (36).[9] But it is the horrors Orestes and

[5] Conacher 1967: 306 discusses the happy coincidence of motives that join Iphigenia to Orestes.

[6] Grube 1941: 315 describes the place of the Taurians where the temple is found as "half-mythical."

[7] It is perhaps relevant that Dana Sutton 1980: 112, 184-9 argues that the *IT* is prosatyric; see also Burnett's comparison 1971: 72, n.23 of the *IT* to the *Cyclops*.

[8] Andreas Spira 1960: 113-21, in his evaluation of the *deus ex machina* in the *IT*, argues that the aetiological motive is primary in this play; Conacher 1967: 304-5 also recognizes the prominence of the aetiological motive, but Grube 1941: 50 finds the religious motive "incidental." For Euripides' part in shaping the myth see discussions in Platnauer 1938: vii-xiii; Gregoire 1965: 96-7; Conacher 1967: 301-5, 310-313; Burnett 1971: 48, n. 1; 73-5.

[9] Diggle 1981: *ad loc.* brackets the subsequent two lines (deleted by

Pylades describe around the temple that make the gruesome barbarity of Artemis' cult vivid. They identify the goddess' temple first by the blood-stained stone found in front of it (69-73) and the trophies of the dead attached to its cornice.[10] Finally they measure their courage against the seemingly fortress-like structure with its high walls, stairs and locks (96-102). This exchange gives Euripides' audience their first "view" of the temple and its cult practice, and of the barbarian goddess Artemis who demands such sacrifice.[11] And yet the chorus of Greek women who enter immediately after the desperate colloquy of Orestes and Pylades, offer a decidedly different view of the goddess and her temple when they sing:

ὦ παῖ τᾶς Λατοῦς,
Δίκτυνν' οὐρεία,
πρὸς σὰν αὐλάν, εὐστύλων
ναῶν χρυσήρεις θριγκούς,
ὁσίας ὅσιον πόδα παρθένιον
κληιδούχου δούλα πέμπω

Child of Leto
Mountain-dwelling Dictyna
Into your courtyard, the golden
cornices of your well-pillared temple,
I, the slave of the sacred guardian,
bring my sacred virgin foot. (126-31)

Here the goddess is celebrated in words suffused with the golden light and holy purity of Greek celebrations of Artemis or, still more, of her brother god Apollo. There is no hint here of the barbarian goddess or her dark sacrifices. By juxtaposing the two descriptions of the temple, Euripides has problematized for his audience the goddess and her cult. As they look at the *skene*, the

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Murray) which explain more fully the goddess' command that she sacrifice, or at least initiate the sacrifices of, "whatever Greeks come to this land" (39).

[10] Plautnauer 1938: *ad loc.* suggests rather gruesomely that the σκῦλα (74) are the heads of the slain and that they are attached to the altar in front of the temple, not to the cornice stones of the temple.

[11] The foreignness of the place is conveyed through the emotional response of the Greek youths; physical evidence is noticeably lacking from the play. Helen Bacon 1961: 115, 119 notes a reference to foreign speech in 179-81, and suggests distinctive physical characteristics may be implied in 72-3. Of some greater relevance to this discussion is her review 1961: 132-4 and 133, n. 12 of the detailed description given to the temple in the *IT*, and her conclusion that far from being foreign, it is "thoroughly Doric in architecture."

audience is invited to imagine at once the bloody altar and trophies described by the Greek youths and the golden corniced and well-columned temple praised by the chorus of Greek women. Nor does the playwright offer explicitly anything that would allow such disparate descriptions of the goddess' temple to be reconciled.

The rituals themselves will gain vivid reality when Iphigenia answers the questions of the Argive strangers brought before her. She describes for the goddess' newest victims the ritual procedure: the consecration, slaughter, cremation and burial (617-26). There is a practical matter-of-factness to the exchange between priestess and Argive youths which makes the ritual darkly alluded to before now seem terribly real. That these foreigners do slaughter Greeks at Artemis' temple Euripides leaves undoubted; that they do so at the goddess' behest, however, remains uncertain.

Just as Iphigenia's sacrifice at Aulis in the literary tradition is represented variously as the responsibility of Artemis or of Agamemnon, so also does Euripides question — but never definitively assert — whether it is Artemis who demands the cruel sacrifice of Greeks or whether the Taurians alone are responsible for this barbarity. Iphigenia, faced with the prospect of new sacrificial victims for the goddess, contemplates the goddess' role in the sacrifices and declares that this goddess who demands that those stained with bloodshed stay apart from her ritual could not demand the bloody ritual practiced at her temple among the Taurians (380-6). It is the Taurians, she concludes, "who are themselves slaughterers of human beings, [and] blame their crime on the goddess" (389-90).[12] But her reflections seem more a protest against the ritual of the temple than an assurance that the goddess eschews such practices. Later, the chorus will entertain the possibility that, though such practices are outlawed in Greece, the goddess among the Taurians may take pleasures in such things (463-6). Equally paradoxically, Iphigenia will say that it is the city, not the goddess, that exacts the penalty of death that Pylades' friend must pay (595-6),[13] and yet, she describes her own role in the ritual as imposed by the goddess (618). Artemis is a troublingly

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[12] τοὺς δ' ἐνθάδ', αὐτοὺς ὄντας ἀνθρωποκτόνους,
ἐς τὴν θεὸν τὸ φαῦλον ἀναφέρειν δοκῶ·
οὐδένα γὰρ οἶμαι δαιμόνων εἶναι κακόν (389-91).

[13] Whitman 1974: 10-11.

ambiguous figure in this play. She is the goddess who seems to have required Iphigenia's sacrifice and then to have averted it. And it was she who brought the Greek girl to her temple among the Taurians where she might preside over similar human sacrifices — rites which Iphigenia denies please the goddess. There is a deliberate effort to create in Artemis a highly ambiguous deity, whose barbaric rites may be civilized when she is brought to Attica, but whose more threatening aspects can never, even in Greece, be wholly dismissed.

The foundation of the cult of Artemis at Attic Brauron, a cult well-known to Euripides' audience, is the goal of the action, and this, with Athena's words at the end directing the foundation of the cult, make of the drama an elaborate and wonderfully romantic *aition* for the local cult. Euripides creates the *aition*, joining this story of Iphigenia's exile and rescue to the cult in part by exploiting Iphigenia's dual identity in the tradition as the daughter Agamemnon sacrificed at Aulis and as the archetypal priestess of Artemis' cult at Brauron.[14] Thus the exile may be felt acutely by the woman, but it is additionally an expression of the displacement of the cult from its proper place in Attica. And Iphigenia's return home to Greece is inextricably tied to the movement of the cult from Asia to Attica. Throughout the play, Iphigenia acts on her own desire to return home, but she acts too as the priestess of Artemis and in accordance with the goddess' wishes.

And, like the goddess, Iphigenia is a highly ambiguous figure, particularly in her relationship to her family and to her home in Greece. Explaining Iphigenia's presence among the Taurians and perhaps explaining as well her willingness to sacrifice Greeks to Artemis is her own near-sacrifice at Aulis by Agamemnon and the Greek army. She recounts events at Aulis almost dispassionately in the prologue (3-33), but later mourns in emotional dochmiacs what she suffered there as she and Orestes lament their family sorrows. She is most bitter as she recalls the deception that brought her to Aulis as the bride of Achilles and found her not mounting his bed but mounting instead an altar where she was to be sacrificed (856, 9, 60-1; cf. 209-17, 359-77). Her father's betrayal and that of the Greeks at Aulis is deflected by Artemis who

[14] Farnell 1896: II, 452-5; 1921: 58; Sale 1975: 265-84; Sansone 1975: 283-95; Strachan 1976: 131-40. For interpretation of this within Euripides' plot, see Caldwell 1974: 26-7.

rescues Iphigenia and brings the girl to be her priestess among the Taurians. The barbarian land and Thoas, the barbarian king, are in this context a refuge of sorts from her own father and people who sought to kill her (29-34). Her duties in her new home, customary to the place, are also an expression of her profound disaffection with the Greeks. She herself alludes to the anger that allows her to participate in the sacrifices of Greeks (354-77), and the Taurians as well assume that this anger will keep her loyal to their goddess and their ritual (336-9, 1418-9). This long-burning anger is exacerbated by the dream Iphigenia relates in the prologue, which she takes as representing Orestes' death. Though in the past she says she wept for the Greeks killed, now, with Orestes dead, she hardens her heart to all Greeks and prepares to participate willingly in the killings of the two Greeks brought to her by the herdsmen (344-50).

Orestes is Iphigenia's one link to Greece and the only surviving heir of her family. In her dream he is represented as the one column of Agamemnon's palace, for, as she explains, "The pillars of the house are the male children," (57). And when the dream indicates to her that he is dead she mourns for the child she left behind when she left for Aulis, but she mourns as well for her paternal house dead now, in the absence of heirs.[15] Although she has declared that Orestes' dream-told death has hardened her against all Greeks, the discovery that the new victims of the goddess are from Argos drives her to try to communicate with her brother by releasing one prisoner to carry a letter to him (578ff.).[16] This letter that she had prepared before she had any courier to carry it, without any confidence that it would be delivered or would bring her brother's help, is poignant evidence of her longing for her brother and for home. But even this is ambiguous. The letter was written, she explains, by a Greek whom she subsequently helped to sacrifice to the goddess (584-6). Its physical existence is as much evidence of Iphigenia's earlier complicity in the killings of Greeks[17] as of her desire to make contact with her brother.

[15] Whitman 1974: 4.

[16] See Burnett's discussion 1971: 54-5 of the letter and its function in the plot and in Euripides' characterization of Iphigenia.

[17] The detail, provided by Iphigenia, that this unfortunate amanuensis did not hold Iphigenia herself responsible for his death, does nothing to rid the priestess of her responsibility implicit in the tale (585-7).

When brother and sister are made known to each other through the mechanism of the letter, there is no question of Iphigenia's allegiance. While previously she might have been satisfied, or at least resigned to remain in the foreign refuge found for her after Aulis, with the discovery that her brother lives, Iphigenia turns her attention to the task of returning him, his loyal companion, and, if possible, herself as well, home to Greece.[18] Although Orestes has come bringing the means of rescue,[19] it is Iphigenia who contrives their escape and that of the cult. She does this, however, by manipulating the piety the foreign king has for the cult of Artemis,[20] thereby deceiving the king and people who gave her refuge so that she may return with her brother and the heaven-fallen statue of Artemis to Greece.

Her deception is justified by necessity, by Apollo's oracle that commands Orestes to rescue Artemis' statue, and by the horrible fate that awaits the Greek youths if they do not escape from that hostile place. But, although Iphigenia refuses Orestes' suggestion that they kill the king because she claims ties of ξενία with him (1020-3), her treatment of Thoas is made to seem nevertheless harsh. In part, it is the characterization Euripides gives to the foreign king. Thoas enters, it is true, eager to witness the sacrifice of the Greeks (1153-4), but he responds to Iphigenia's feigned concerns about cultic purity with genuine respect for the goddess and her priestess. He may initially doubt that the statue moved of itself, but he is quickly convinced and eager to take whatever steps are necessary to appease the goddess and purify her cult (1165-7). Iphigenia manipulates the foreign king's piety, ironically mixing truth with falsehood in her explanations in a way that must call the attention of the knowing audience to the ambiguous Artemis, who is at once the barbaric goddess recognized by Thoas and the familiar goddess hidden in Iphigenia's double-meanings. When she announces that the king sent to the goddess offerings—

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[18] The chorus of Greek serving women are of course omitted from Iphigenia and Orestes' escape plan. Their return to Greece is arranged by Athena (1467-8).

[19] Burnett 1971: 49, perhaps because she structures her discussion of the play's action on the "rescue motif," wrongly gives priority in the rescue to Orestes.

[20] Conacher 1967: 309; Burnett 1971: 59-61 discusses the identification of Iphigenia and Artemis in this scene, as well as the encounter with Thoas.

meaning Orestes and Pylades—which were not pure (1163), the word καθαρά necessarily has a double reference. She explains to Thoas that it refers to Orestes' crime of matricide, which she makes falsely to extend its impurity to Pylades. But for a Greek audience—or a Greek goddess—the offerings, as human offerings, are inherently impure. Just as the goddess has two faces, Iphigenia's ritual language has double meanings. The program of calculated irony which Iphigenia wields against the king is its harshest in the prayer with which Iphigenia concludes:

> ὦ Διὸς Λητοῦς τ' ἄνασσα παρθέν', ἢν νίψω φόνον
> τῶνδε καὶ θύσωμεν οὗ χρή, καθαρὸν οἰκήσεις δόμον,
> εὐτυχεῖς δ' ἡμεῖς ἐσόμεθα. τἄλλα δ' οὐ λέγουσ' ὅμως
> τοῖς τὰ πλείον' εἰδόσιν θεοῖς σοί τε σημαίνω, θεά.
>
> Virgin goddess, daughter of Zeus and Leto, if I should purge
> the blood guilt of these men and we sacrifice where we ought,
> you will dwell in a pure house and we will be blessed.
> As for the rest, I say nothing, but to the gods who know more
> and to you, Goddess, I show my meaning. (1230-4)

For Thoas, Iphigenia's prayer gives the appearance of being suited to the ritual concerns and procedures she has outlined for cleansing the goddess' cult of the impurities of the Greeks and he assents to that meaning (1221). But he is deceived: her words, as all but he know, are in fact more suited to the hidden agenda she pursues, to steal herself and the goddess' statue from the Taurians and bring them home to Greece. Iphigenia's deception is necessary to fufill Apollo's will, to return Artemis' cult statue to Greece, purify her brother and end her own exile. But the very act of forwarding these goals, while it demonstrates her loyalty, demonstrates as well her capacity for deception. In this happy tale of successful homecoming Iphigenia remains a highly ambiguous figure whose exile both provides the means for Orestes' reintegration into his home and expresses the otherness of the cult whose *aition* Euripides writes.

In the *Helen* the ambiguity of the female exile is as clearly marked as it is in the *Taurica*, though not so much because of Helen's own history, which in this play is impeccable, as because of her well-known story. In the dominant literary tradition, Helen's alienation from her husband's home ends when Menelaus, with the help of the Argive army, conquers Troy and takes

her back to Greece. But for his play, Euripides has inverted the usual characterization of Helen as the betrayer of her husband's home and has given his audience instead a woman wholly taken up with protecting her chastity in her husband's absence and forwarding her husband's homecoming when he appears. The strong literary tradition that makes of Helen an adultress provides a disquieting context in which the Euripidean Helen must be read. It is in this dissonance between the adultress of the tradition and the chaste wife created here that the ambiguity of this female exile is to be found.

Like Clytemnestra, her sister in the tradition, Helen elsewhere is a woman who, by her sexual transgression (which is reinforced by her spatial transference to another man's home), causes men's deaths. But for Helen, the connection between transgression and resultant deaths is wholly disproportionate. She betrays Menelaus and, in what becomes a measure of the horror of her betrayal, countless Greeks — not just her husband — die as a consequence. Through the dire consequences of her actions, Helen becomes in the tradition the archetypal betraying — and, therefore, murdering — woman. Before Euripides treated this story, there existed, of course, a minority tradition that excused Helen's part in the Trojan War. Stesichorus is said to have written that Helen never went to Troy.[21] And in the years just before Euripides' *Helen* the rhetorician Gorgias had taken up Helen's tale in order to demonstrate how an expert might defend this most indefensible woman. Gorgias does not change Helen's narrative; he accepts the traditional story of her adulterous departure from her husband's house and instead tries to redirect responsibility away from Helen by demonstrating variously the superior power of the gods, who willed her to go with Paris to Troy, or of Paris, who with his superior strength could overpower her resistance and take her to Troy, or of Persuasion, which possesses countless irresistable strengths to overcome the will of even the strongest.[22]

But when Euripides reshaped the narrative to make Helen innocent, he is careful to remove all guilt for her transgression of domestic boundaries. Helen, it is true, does leave her husband's home, but not willingly, to pursue an adulterous relationship with

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21 See above, Chapter 1, note 10.
22 Diels and Kranz 82 B 11. 6-8.

Paris; rather, at Zeus' behest, she is taken out of harm's way to Egypt, whose king, Proteus, is to keep her safe until her husband's return. Menelaus and the Greeks fight and capture Troy not for Helen, but for a semblance of the woman Zeus sends in her place. In what is perhaps the clearest demonstration that a woman's exile and return in the Greek tradition is ultimately an issue reflecting on the male, his heroism and homecoming, the poet's substitution of a phantom Helen for the real Helen is used to call into question the significance of the epic struggle itself, emptying the battles to reclaim the phantom Helen of meaning.

Initially, Helen, removed from her husband's home at Zeus' command, is returned to an existence strangely like that of girlhood. She is held in isolation, her chastity protected, by Proteus, who acts as a surrogate father. But when the play opens, the king who protected her is dead and new threats against her chastity come now from the old king's son. Like Penelope threatened with an unwanted marriage as she waits for her husband to return from Troy,[23] Euripides' Helen must use whatever resources she has to preserve her allegiance to her husband. Her initial response, when the play opens, is to cling suppliant-like to the tomb of her former protector. Her supplication at Proteus' tomb is curious, not the least because she pursues it at the tomb of a dead king, rather than at a god's altar. Moreover, she cannot hope, as is usual with such scenes of supplication in tragedy, to win protection from the king of the place, for he is the aggressor that makes her flight necessary. Her supplication at Proteus' tomb is in fact completely futile, a vivid expression of her vulnerability and her hopeless determination to remain faithful to her husband.

From the beginning of Euripides' play Helen's faithfulness to her husband is never in question. The virtuous Helen found in Egypt is contrasted, first by Teucer, then by Menelaus and his servant, with the adulterous Helen, the phantom, who was the object of the war. These comparisons serve only to emphasize the visible woman's apparent virtue, while they remind the audience of the tradition of the betraying Helen.

When her husband arrives — that rescuer necessary to exile dramas — he comes believing himself already in possession of

[23] Noteworthy but unsurprising in these tales is the intersection, with respect to the woman, of the role of first father and then husband.

his adulterous wife, and, of course, he comes utterly destitute himself, stripped of every mark of his own heroism and having lost his means of returning home. Euripides has been careful to establish Menelaus' complete dependence on Helen as he joins their fortunes in this homeward escape. It is Helen who will restore to her husband his heroic armor and both his opportunity to defend his wife and to effect his own and her homecoming. And she will do this first by engaging the help of another woman and then by exploiting, as Iphigenia had, the credulity of the foreign king.

Theonoe's complicity is crucial to their escape, Helen explains, because her prescience will make her privy to their deception and her loyalty to her brother, Theoclymenus, will cause her to reveal it to him. The trial before Theonoe, who presents herself as the gods' representative in this matter, allows both Helen and Menelaus to detail the justice of their escape from Egypt and their return home to Greece. And when Theonoe accepts their appeal, explicitly siding with the justice of her dead father against the unlawful desires of her brother, she guarantees the rectitude of Menelaus and Helen's escape from Egypt.[24]

Nevertheless, Helen's strategy for evading Theoclymenus, whether divinely sanctioned or not, invites a comparison, almost an identification, of this virtuous Helen with the deceptive Helen of the tradition. Like Iphigenia in the *Taurica* or Penelope in the *Odyssey,* Helen will use deception against one man to prove her loyalty and effect her own and her man's homecoming. Declaring her husband dead — making Menelaus the messenger of his own death — she convinces the Egyptian king to give her a ship, rowers, and armor necessary, she asserts, for a proper memorial service for him. The scene, Helen standing between Menelaus who would take her across the sea and Theoclymenus who claims her for his wife, recalls the traditional tale of Helen's deception of Menelaus to escape across the sea to Troy. But here the fiction of betrayal is enacted as a demonstration of Helen's fidelity; because she acts to take again her place in Menelaus'

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[24] It is significant that Theonoe frames her decision not as a choice between the foreign woman Helen and her own brother, but as a decision between two men, her father and brother. For Theonoe, as for the exiles discussed in this chapter, allegiance to one necessitates betrayal of the other.

home, her deceptive departure from Theoklymenos' land reflects only honor on this most maligned of women. Going well beyond even Gorgias' defense of Helen, Euripides has rehabilitated this mythic adultress by inverting the characteristic movement of Helen from home to home. Here she is not defined by her abandonment of her husband's house and consequent responsibility for the deaths of countless men; instead she is redefined by loyalty in her rescue of her husband from foreign dangers and her own return, with Menelaus, home again.

For Helen, whose exile is doubly expressed by her separation from her husband and from his home, her return home is, of course, wholly identified with his. His spatial identity becomes hers in an assertion of her faithfulness that is at variance with the dominant tradition. Instead of abandoning her husband's home for that of another man's and in this way causing the deaths of many Greeks, she is shown effecting her husband's — and her own — escape from foreign danger and return home. Thus, exile, which may express the inherent alienation of a woman from her husband's house, is used in this drama to rehabilitate Helen, who is shown ending her own exile when she joins her interests wholly with her husband's and, in a demonstration of her fidelity, becomes the means of returning Menelaus safely home again. But because the slaughter of the Trojan War and the traditional tale of Helen's transgression stand behind this happy story of Helen's reintegration into her husband's home and Greek society, Euripides' revision of the story has an almost cautionary force. The chaste Helen and the adulterous one have the same face, and Euripides invites his audience to share in Menelaus' confusion in deciding which it is that he sees and which he brings home. Helen, in her deception of Theoclymenos and her fidelity to Menelaus, remains a highly ambiguous figure.

Medea

By their strenuous efforts to return themselves and their partners home both Helen and Iphigenia act in concert with their male protectors and overcome by their loyalty the distance that separates them from home. But in Euripides' much earlier *Medea*, the peculiar necessity of betrayal and loyalty that makes a woman in some sense always an exile becomes the defining, almost

exaggerated, characteristic of this woman, who, more than any other, is wholly without a return home.[25]

Standing behind the *Medea* and reflecting on the enacted events of the drama is a tale of rescue that closely resembles the pattern Euripides was to use in both the *Taurica* and the *Helen*. Coming to Colchis to steal the Fleece that will win for him the return of his kingdom, Jason is aided by Medea, who makes possible his theft and, by escaping with him, his own escape from that land. For Medea, whose connection to the barbarian land she leaves and to the king of the land is quite explicit, this act of assistance to Jason is a betrayal of her birth-family, a betrayal most vividly expressed in her ruthless killing of her brother. And it is an act of self-redefinition, like the actions of Helen, who is redefined by her chaste loyalty to her husband and her success in effecting his and her own escape from Egypt. Medea's actions repudiate her father's claims on her and reject Colchis as home, even as they demonstrate her complete allegiance to Jason, whom by virtue of this act she claims as husband. Home for Medea becomes Jason's home and so departure from Colchis becomes for her, as for him, an escape from exile.

But it is not Medea's unusually eventful movement from her father's to her husband's home that Euripides has dramatized. The happy tale of a union of interests between a hero and a woman and their escape from foreign lands to Greece is merely the distant antecedent to the harsh rejection of Medea by Jason, which precipitates in this tragedy a brutal distortion of the exile's elsewhere happy drama. Medea in Euripides' play is not the fortunate woman who will be united with her mate and delivered from exile, but a woman expelled by her husband from his home and forced to find another more distant place of exile. For Medea, defined by her history of expulsions from other places, the exile from Corinth is a recapitulation, in a sense, a reenactment of the previous exiles that led to it.[26] And it becomes a commentary on

[25] Rabinowitz 1984: 117-8 remarks on a similar structure in the *Andromache*; Margaret Visser 1986: 149-66 takes up the opposition I discuss here, though to a somewhat different end.

[26] In this it is like the recollection of Iphigenia's sacrifice at Aulis in her sacrifice of other Greeks at Artemis' temple among the Taurians, or the recollection of Oedipus' killing of his father in his violent curse of his sons: it is the enactment of one iteration of a motif central to the definition of the protagonist.

these earlier exiles even as they shape the tragedy that Euripides dramatizes.

Whatever future horrors may be hinted at in the words of the Nurse and the Paedagogus (49ff.), Medea's early words in the play invite pity and sympathy. Her anger at her marriage, at Jason and his new bride, and her own self-pity derive from a sense of betrayal that looks back to that earlier tale of rescue and escape from Colchis. Then she had irrevocably traded her father's house for Jason's, helping him to gain his own means of returning home, but now Jason (by a similar act of betrayal to gain for himself a new home) has expelled her from his house. She recognizes now that she has no place in Greece and hopelessly longs for the home of her father that she betrayed for Jason and to which she can never return.

Medea's plight is in many ways unique, but she herself acknowledges that much of what she has suffered is the common misfortunes of woman. In particular, she describes how a new bride is like a stranger in a foreign land:

> ἐς καινὰ δ' ἤθη καὶ νόμους ἀφιγμένην
> δεῖ μάντιν εἶναι, μὴ μαθοῦσαν οἴκοθεν,
> ὅτῳ μάλιστα χρήσεται ξυνευνέτῃ.
>
> And since she has come to new practices and customs
> she must be a seer, if she has not learned at home
> in what way she may best treat her husband. (238-40)

And yet, none of the Corinthian women Medea addresses are quite so isolated as Medea, who is, in fact a stranger in Greece (253-8). If exile is the defining state of women, always strangers in their husbands' homes, always dependent on their pleasure, Medea is merely a more extreme expression of female exile. She not only left her father's home to join her husband, but severed any hope of return for herself; her deeds to please her husband consisted of more than service in his bed and his house; she was an active agent of his success, killing for him, first at Colchis and then at Iolcus. But here in her initial appeal to the women of Corinth, it is not the horror of what Medea has done that occupies attention, rather it is her extreme suffering as a woman and as an exile.

But in Medea Euripides has created a harsh dissonance between this vulnerability of the exile and her power to betray and

destroy.[27] Creon, in his justification for ordering her from his kingdom hints at her destructive potential, but it is in the argument with Jason that Medea herself will detail the violence that she has committed. She lists her deeds proudly, as evidence of her faithful service to Jason, in order to reproach him for his abandonment of her (475-91). She had joined her interests to his and devoted her considerable talents to forwarding his success, and so she indignantly condemns him for betraying her. It is almost comic, this representation of deeds of horrifying violence as acts of a faithful wife working for her husband's success. But Medea's narrative is merely a more extreme version of Helen's; both women wholly join their interests to their husband's and effect their joint escape to Greece. And for Medea, the home she won by her faithful service to Jason is taken from her in what she claims is a gross breach of faith.

If Euripides' audience found Medea's pride in her murderous crimes a strange expression of her foreignness, Jason, at least, makes no comment on that aspect of her argument. But he does offer a contrasting reading of the events in their past, dismissing her responsibility for his success and making extravagant claims for what she has gained in coming to Greece (526-41).[28] He is to be

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[27] Grube 1941: 147; see the discussion of *Medea* by Hans Diller 1960: 93ff.

[28] Jason had responded, in his first argument with Medea, that she had benefitted by her association with him in being brought from a barbarian land to Greece. In what appears to be a demonstration of profound insensitivity, Jason seems to expect that Medea, setting aside any personal bias, will agree to the marked superiority of Greece. His words invite us to recall that only shortly before Medea had been lamenting her loss of her homeland. In her words to the Corinthian women of the chorus she had distinguished her sufferings from theirs precisely on the grounds that they have their city and their fathers' houses, while she had lost her home forever. But if Euripides has been careful to give sympathetic expression to Medea's longing for a home that is not Greek, he has, in Jason's words, appealed to the patriotic bias of the Greek audience, inviting them to understand the play using their own spatial categories of what is home and what is not. It becomes significant that it was from a barbarian land to Greece that Jason helped Medea to escape — the place of exile, as in the *Helen* and *Taurica*, is defined by it being non-Greek, and home is, in these plays always Greece. This opposition of Greek to barbarian was fundamental to the *Taurica*; in the *Helen* it was less central to the plot, but given expression nevertheless in the hostile orders that any Greek arriving in Theoclymenos' kingdom be slain. But in those happier tragedies, the hero and the woman are both Greek and the escape from a foreign land is, for both, a welcome return home. For the *Medea*, however, Euripides brings complications to the story-pattern with the inclusion of a barbarian woman, who confuses and challenges these categories.

thanked, it seems, for rescuing her from exile in a barbarian land and he rejects any implication that this rescue binds him to her. For Medea, his retelling of her narrative, his redefinition of the meaning of her deeds is a more serious expression of her exile than those decrees pronounced earlier by Creon. In his response, Medea is denied her place with Jason, exiled from the home she chose when she left her father's home. And so it becomes clear that she must find another place and another rescuer.

What follows is a significantly truncated iteration of the exile/ rescue motif. Aegeus, in an appearance that many critics have complained of as being unmotivated, appears unexpectedly in Corinth and is persuaded to offer Medea, in exchange for her skills in interpreting an oracle from Apollo, a safe haven, if she is successful in escaping from Corinth and making her own way to Athens. Aegeus is the rescuer of this new iteration of the exile narrative, but his role is noticeably limited; in the end, he promises refuge while refusing rescue to Medea.[29] But the appearance and limited role of Aegeus is not evidence of Euripides' incompetent composition; it is significant in defining what makes Medea, as she accepts the exile imposed on her by Jason and Creon and transforms it into an eager escape, so terrifying. In her previous flight from Colchis, she acted in concert with Jason to further his goals as well as her own, but here there is no such link joining Aegeus to Medea.[30] Abandoned by Jason, Medea here acts for herself; and if her earlier deeds of murder were an expression of her allegiance to Jason, her deeds now are a repudiation of this former alliance. With this second exile, Medea assumes a

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Exile and home cease to have meaning for this woman whose life is defined by her movement from one tenuously held place to another.

[29] Aegeus is quite particular in refusing to give Medea assistance in leaving Corinth: she must make her way to Athens on her own, but if she should reach Athens, he will protect her from all who would threaten her (726-30). It is noteworthy that this play departs from the pattern evinced in other dramas of exile in 1) Aegeus' lack of a family relationship to Medea and 2) Medea's ability to escape to this new place of refuge without the aid of a rescuer to bring her transportation. See Grubes' discussion 1941: 156-8; Buttrey 1958: 1-17.

[30] In some traditions Medea will become Aegeus' lover and consort and will, significantly, threaten to murder Aegeus' son, Theseus, when he first arrives, unrecognized, at his father's house in Athens (Plutarch, *Thes.* 12.2-3; Apollodorus, *Epitome* 1.6; Ovid, *Metam.* 7.392-429). Euripides seems to ignore this tradition, although it could be argued that it is hinted at in the prophecy, for Aegeus' progeny, that Medea here interprets for him.

threatening independence. With the murder of the children,[31] Medea becomes indeed an exile, closing for herself all possibility of return to Jason or to Corinth. This act is the clearest repudiation of her bonds to Jason and expression of her willingness to be the exile that Creon and Jason compel her to be. With this murder she assumes her place wholly outside of Greek, indeed, outside of human society. Her alienation from humankind is expressed fittingly by the divinely sent dragon chariot that removes her from Jason's—and the audience's —view.

It is in Medea that the association of barbarian alien and female alien is most clearly expressed. Medea moves from Colchis to Greece, from one man's place to another, and, because she is a barbarian and because she is a woman, she is never at home and always dangerous. The threat she poses is real and it is personal. Helen may have been responsible indirectly for the deaths of many warriors, named and unnamed, and Iphigenia may have been in some way connected with the sacrificial deaths of unnamed Greeks. But Medea, in her father's house, kills her brother; in Corinth, she kills the king's daughter (the only female death she is said to have caused); and, of course, she kills Jason's sons. In an inversion of the woman's generative role, she destroys every house she occupies by destroying its offspring.[32] And then she escapes to another house. She becomes, in her power to destroy, the clearest expression of the danger presented by the alien woman living within every man's house.

Exile in Greek traditional narrative may be a category that has meaning only for men, for whom "home" is a fixed and stable element of character. Odysseus is defined by belonging in Ithaca; it is part of his identity, to be concealed or revealed along with his name and his paternity. But Penelope's place is disputed: should

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[31] One parallel between her departure from Colchis and from Corinth is worth noting: her escape from Colchis was effected by her murder of the king's son; her departure from Corinth is preceded by her killing first Creon's child and then Jason's sons. The difference is of course that the Corinthian murders were not necessary for her escape. But all were willful acts that have the effect of closing off for Medea all possibility of return to these earlier homes.

[32] An exception: she persuades the daughters of Pelias to kill their father, but here she seems to be recreating her own house-destroying crimes in these Greek women.

she wait for her husband in Ithaca or return to her father's home? Once she had come from her birth-home to Ithaca; some day she may return so that she may be given to another man and go to his house. Ithaca does not define Penelope; although both Ithaca and Penelope may be seen to participate in the narrative in defining Odysseus. When Andromache makes her appeal to Hector (*Iliad* 6.414ff.), she strengthens it by reminding her husband that she has neither father nor brothers living; her fate depends wholly on his fate and on Troy's. The force of this particularly poignant reminder of Andromache's earlier losses is complex, but in part it is an expression of Andromache's complete identification with Hector's interests that invites a like response from him.[33] Since there is for Andromache no division of allegiance between her husband's home and her father's, her appeal has special force. In the story of Persephone, as represented in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, the conflict between birth home[34] and marriage home is quite explicit. And the resolution, that has Persephone share her year between the two, supports what was suggested by the Homeric examples, that women in ancient narrative, insofar as place participates in the definition of their selves, are tied both to their birth and to their marriage homes and defined by their movement from one to the other.

These examples suggest that it is not place, but the progression from one place to the next that most defines women in ancient literature.[35] Andromache, in the prologue to Euripides' play, introduces herself by describing her birth-home (Asian Thebes, 1), her transference to "the hearth of King Priam," as the bride of Hector (3-4) and her present position in Phthia as the slave-concubine of Neoptolemos. No single place defines Andromache; she has no stable locus of identity, but only a narrative that links one place to the next in an irreversible movement that is her life. And so also Alcestis is defined first by her movement from birth-

[33] In a sense it is the converse of Medea's reproaches to Jason: Medea argues that she had joined her interests with Jason's, as demonstrated by her severing all ties with her paternal home, and she rebukes Jason for not responding with equal loyalty. Noticeable here is the wife's argument for her loyalty to her husband deriving from the absence of secondary ties to the paternal home.

[34] Here noticeably the birth home is not defined by the girl's father, but by her mother, Demeter.

[35] Katz 1976: 111-8.

home to marriage-home and then, more significantly, by her movement from there to Hades (and back again). Looked at in this way, Medea's movement from Colchis to Jason's home (wherever he makes it) to Athens—her repeated departures from an ever-shifting "home"—begins to seem like only an extreme and extremely violent version of these other women's narratives.

Most female characters, like most women in antiquity, of course, were ideally defined by a single movement, from their birth home to their marriage home. The polarity of these two places defines them, as the different polarity of home and exile defines the male hero.[36] But the difference is significant. Return home for a male is an act of reintegration, a return to the source of self. For the female, who is defined by no one place, the movement between places only reasserts her spatial alienation.

The female exile is indeed a special case. But this is not simply because her place is "in the home," as might seem obvious from the conservative nature of Greek society, but because place functions in a fundamentally different way to define female characters in Greek traditional tales than it does to define male characters. Women are defined by an irreversible progress from one man's home to another. No fixed place is theirs; they are always exiles and always suspect. This is apparent in ancient narrative and it does not change in tragedy. A woman's place may be in the home, but it is not her home and when she is introduced into it she may bring a productive fertility or destruction, for both possibilities are represented as present always in this exile.

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[36] Helen as well as Creusa in the *Ion* do not follow this pattern, though for different reasons. Creusa does not leave Athens to marry; instead, a foreign husband is introduced into the city as her husband. It is interesting that the distrust of the outsider that I find in most tales directed against wives is in this tale directed against Xuthus. Creusa does not leave her birth home, in the usual way of a woman, because she is closely tied to that place, giving expression to Athenian ideals of autochthony and deriving her identity from this one place. It is noticeable that in the *Ion* Creusa takes a journey like that of a hero, out of her city and then returns home again, successful in her quest, her identity as the mother of a hero fully established.

CHAPTER SIX

THREE WHO WOULD NOT COME HOME

Exile for the male hero is very different. With a hero's identity traditionally defined as much by birthplace as by father's name, the male has a fixed, identifying place of origin. Displacement from home for these heroes is not permanent, although for Odysseus, trapped on Calypso's island, it threatens to become so. Nevertheless, however long Odysseus remains with Calypso, there is no chance of Calypso's island replacing Ithaca in the landscape of his identity. The hero's desire for Ithaca is evident in the tears he sheds sitting by the sea. And when Calypso announces to him what Hermes has announced to her, that she is to allow him to depart for home, Odysseus hesitates only briefly, suspicious of this offer of release from his long-time captor, before he quickly makes plans for his departure (5.171ff.). With Odysseus' release from Calypso, the hero's journey home is reinitiated and the homecoming that is the goal of the narrative is assured.

When we meet the heroic exile in tragedy, however, his response to rescue is more complicated and its place in the drama more central. This hero does not greet the offer of escape and return home with the simple pleasure of the epic Odysseus. Prometheus, Philoctetes, and Oedipus in the *Coloneus*, despite the well-established reasons each has for desiring to return home — or at least to leave exile — all refuse rescue when it is offered. This possibility of refusing escape from exile and return home, present in Odysseus' debate with Calypso over the relative merits of life with the goddess or with Penelope, is made in these tragedies the central and defining crisis. The opportunity of return home becomes the occasion for individual self-assertion against the demands of the community. And the departure from exile ultimately is used to express the reintegration of the disaffected individual into his community.

In these dramas of exile the pattern of action resembles broadly the pattern found in the *Helen* and the *Taurica*. The exile, isolated from his community, suffers severe hardships; the possibility of return home is brought by a member of the exile's home com-

munity; and there are difficulties that must be overcome before the return home may be accomplished. But the differences are significant. The male exile's longing to return home receives less attention than in the women's exile dramas; in its place is found what may be considered its converse, expressions of the extreme harshness of life as an exile. As a consequence, descriptive details of setting play a larger role in these plays. There is no foreign king to oppose the exile's departure,[1] so that when, from his community, a rescuer arrives bringing to the exile the means of escape, there is no danger inherent in the escape itself. The tension derives instead from the conflict between exile and rescuer. It is a common feature of all dramas of exile that the rescuer, like Orestes in the *Iphigenia Taurica,* is motivated by his own interest. But for men there is not always such identity of purpose between the exile and his rescuer as was found between the women and the men who rescued them from exile. For Prometheus, Philoctetes, and Oedipus, the offer of rescue[2] comes from one who is himself a representative of what may be defined broadly as the exile's country of origin, but he is inimical to the exile not only because he stands to benefit by the rescue but more especially because he is, or represents, the hated cause of the exile. For all three, the offer of rescue carries with it costs that are too high, and the protagonist, at least initially, refuses it.[3] The central action of these dramas, unlike those of female exiles, is not the deception of a foreign king and escape home from foreign dangers, but the persuading of the recalcitrant exile to accept the offer of rescue and return home,[4] and their unifying concern is with the disaffection of the individual from the political whole.

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[1] An exception may be Theseus in the *Coloneus,* discussed below. The king is necessary in the tales of women exiles, in the role of the male who rivals the husband in possession of the woman.

[2] Of course, Hermes brings to Prometheus not Zeus' offer of release, but his threat of further punishment, at the end of this first work of the trilogy.

[3] Iphigenia had at least as great a cause for resentment against Greeks and especially Agamemnon (and, by extension, his son and heir, Orestes) as either Prometheus or Philoctetes. Even more than they, she can claim complete innocence in what she suffered at the hands of the Greeks who sacrificed her (Philoctetes was bitten by a serpent when he trespassed on a sanctuary [1326-28]; Prometheus neither denies nor repents the 'crime' for which he suffers his exile.). Nevertheless, when confronted with her brother, Iphigenia does not hesitate to engineer their escape (see above, pp. 113 ff.).

[4] Jones 1962: 270-2 compares the *Prometheus Bound* and *Philoctetes.*

The Prometheus Bound

Because it is only the first play in a trilogy in which the exile motif is played out, and also because what Prometheus suffers is not the usual, essentially inadvertent or involuntary exile, but a self-chosen[5] punishment for resistance to Zeus, the *Prometheus Bound* is in some ways difficult to assess as an exile drama. But in its broad outlines, as well as in some details, it invites comparison with other dramas of exile. Prometheus, chained to a mountain in the distant reaches of the world at the play's beginning, is exiled from Olympus for having given mortals the gift of fire. The play is not taken up with an attempt to escape home again; instead the god chained to this place of isolation is visited first by Oceanus, who urges concessions and compromise, and then by Io, who has also known the violence of the new ruler of Olympus, Zeus. Their discussions turn on explication of the cruel workings of Zeus' power and the appropriate response to it. It is only at play's end that the exile's "rescuer," Hermes, arrives, sent from Olympus by Zeus. But in this exile drama he brings no plan for escape, coming rather to command the exiled god to yield to the new ruler or suffer still worse torments. The harsh exile of Prometheus, his isolation from Olympus and from humankind intended as a coercive measure by Zeus, is demonstrably ineffective in returning this rebel to any sort of obedience, and the appeal from Hermes at play's end has the effect not of ending his exile but of prolonging and worsening it.

Prometheus' physical torment, his suspension between heaven and earth and ultimate isolation, serves as a metaphor for his liminal status between gods and men. For his service to humankind — treason to the gods, as Zeus sees it— Prometheus is to be excluded from the defining locus of divinity, Olympus. And yet, though he is now said to be exiled from that place of the gods, Prometheus' place on Olympus cannot be said ever to have been secure. He is a Titan and, like his brother Atlas, is defined more by his position outside of the circle of Olympians, in revolt against the rule of the new gods, than by any claim to that home of the gods. Just as Atlas had been condemned to stand sustaining Olympus above earth, so now Prometheus too is condemned to

[5] See 266ff.; "self-chosen" because he could end it by yielding to the new ruler.

suffer his torment suspended on a mountain peak that reaches towards heaven, exiled from the gods and isolated as well from the human beings he is punished for protecting. It is the very fact of exile itself, the exclusion from Olympus and not Olympus itself, that defines this hero, even as another hero might be defined by his home and his struggle to return to it. For Prometheus return represents not reintegration but a refusal of what is fundamental to his self. And so it is that this drama of exile ends not with return home but with a deeper alienation.

As with other exile dramas, details of the immediate setting have a preeminence unusual for extant tragedy. But where the *Helen* and *Taurica* define exile as a foreign land filled with barbarians hostile to Greeks, the land of exile in both the *Prometheus* and *Philoctetes* is defined as a land of harsh and potentially deadly nature. Details of landscape are used to give vivid expression to the physical and even to the intangible sufferings of the exile, and so special force to the exile's refusal to negotiate a rescue.

The binding of Prometheus on an inhospitable mountain top at the edge of the earth is the god's punishment for defying Zeus.[6] The barren and isolated landscape described in the opening lines and in brief references throughout the play thus provides more than just a backdrop to the drama; it is itself a part of Prometheus' punishment and contributes to his suffering. What Prometheus will suffer exposed in this harsh landscape, bound and unable to protect himself even against the weather, is contemplated by Hephaestus as reluctantly he binds his fellow god to the rock (18-27). Isolation from mankind is counted by Hephaestus the first and most serious source of Prometheus' suffering:

> τῆς ὀρθοβούλου Θέμιδος αἰπυμῆτα παῖ,
> ἄκοντά σ' ἄκων δυσλύτοις χαλκεύμασι
> προσπασσαλεύσω τῶιδ' ἀπανθρώπωι πάγωι,
> ἵν' οὔτε φωνὴν οὔτε του μορφὴν βροτῶν
> ὄψηι

> Ambitious child of right-counseling Themis,
> Against my will I will fasten you, who are unwilling,
> with bonds of unbreakable bronze
> on this mountain far from humankind
> where neither voice nor form of any mortal
> will you see. (18-22)

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[6] Griffith 1983: ad 2.

Only secondarily does Hephaestus comment on the harshness of the physical environment that is to be Prometheus' prison:

> ... σταθευτὸς δ' ἡλίου φοίβηι φλογὶ
> χροιᾶς ἀμείψεις ἄνθος· ἀσμένωι δέ σοι
> ἡ ποικιλείμων νὺξ ἀποκρύψει φάος
> πάχνην θ' ἑώιαν ἥλιος σκεδᾶι πάλιν·
>
> Scorched by the gleaming fire of the sun
> you will change the bloom of your skin; but you will be glad
> when night in its spangled garb hides away the light
> but at dawn the sun will scatter again the hoar-frost.
> (22-5)

The unending cycle of day and night, of hot and cold, and the immutability of the unresponsive mountains that surround Prometheus are only part of the torture: they are compounded by the threat that the punishment has no end:

> ἀεὶ δὲ τοῦ παρόντος ἀχθηδὼν κακοῦ
> τρύσει σ', ὁ λωφήσων γὰρ οὐ πέφυκέ πω.
>
> Always the burden of your present evil
> will wear you down, for the person
> who will relieve you is not yet born. (26-7)

This triad, isolation from humankind, the harsh physical environment, and the interminability of the torture will reappear both in Prometheus' own laments and in the sympathetic exclamations of those who do come upon Prometheus in his mountain prison. Together they give strong reason for Prometheus to capitulate to the demands of Hermes and they measure the strength of Prometheus' refusal when it comes at play's end.

There is an evident irony in this god's punishment. Prometheus is chained to a mountain at the edge of the earth for the crime of giving to mortals fire, the source of civilized life. His gift, as he describes it himself (107-13), is the gift of science, giving humans the power to affect their world, and thus the gift of civilization. But now, Zeus punishes Prometheus with sufferings that are an ironic inversion of this gift. Not only is Prometheus isolated from those for whose sake he risked divine anger, but having given human beings the ability to affect their environment, he is placed wholly at the mercy of the physical world. Prometheus bound at the edges of the earth must endure the harsh alternation of day and night, helpless to amend his situation. Because of his civilizing

gift of fire to humankind, he is himself made powerless to make habitable the wasteland that surrounds him.

But nature is not merely the harsh mechanism of Prometheus' suffering; for this hero it has a dual and seemingly contradictory role as well. In the absence of human companionship, it is nature, in its gentler, more beneficient forms, that Prometheus calls upon as a witness to what he suffers:

> ὦ δῖος αἰθὴρ καὶ ταχύπτεροι πνοαί,
> ποταμῶν τε πηγαὶ ποντίων τε κυμάτων
> ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα παμμῆτόρ τε γῆ,
> καὶ τὸν πανόπτην κύκλον ἡλίου καλῶ,
> ἴδεσθέ μ', οἷα πρὸς θεῶν πάσχω θεός.

> Bright heaven and swift-blowing breeze,
> and springs of rivers, and countless laughter
> of sea swells, and earth, mother of all,
> and you, the all-seeing circle of the sun, I call upon:
> See me, what sorts of things I, a god, suffer
> at the hands of the gods. (88-92)

The personification here, of the sea-waves (γέλασμα 90), of the earth (παμμῆτορ 90) and of the sun (πανόπτην 91), is quite mild, but seems to underline Prometheus' alienation from animate communities of gods or men and the substitution for these of nature itself as his only companion. The chorus of Oceanids, who come neither from the realm of Zeus nor of mortals but from the chambers of their father Oceanus beneath the sea (128-35), seem the physical manifestations of the nature Prometheus calls upon and which sustains him.

The source both of his sufferings and of the scant comfort available to him, the harsh world that surrounds Prometheus seems also in this play to mirror the protagonist's own nature with its generosity to the race of humans and its obduracy towards the commands of Zeus. Prometheus may cry out against the harshness of his physical surroundings and seek comfort in the company of those who visit him, but when Hermes comes to the chained god full of commands and threats from Zeus, Prometheus is unyielding. He had refused to join those "who enter Zeus' banquet hall" and suffered the torture of harsh exile; now, he refuses the god's demand that he reveal the details of the marriage that will bring an end to that god's rule. Prometheus, with a will as adamantine as the rock to which he is joined by chains,

invites Zeus to hurl at him the worst weather he can conjure up (992-4) and compares himself to waves which respond to no such pleas as Hermes has brought (1001). And, when he is swallowed by the rocky mountain at the play's end, it is nature which Prometheus will call upon as witness (1091-3).

Prometheus is defined both by the place he occupies, suspended between Olympus and earth, and by the harsh and intractable natural world, which seems to externalize his own unyielding nature. No place is his; he belongs eternally *between.* A god defined by his disaffection from the community of divinities, he resembles Philoctetes and Oedipus in the *Colonus*, who also are alienated from their communities. And, as in both of these later plays of Sophocles, the physical locale is used to define both the hero and his exile.

The Philoctetes

When Odysseus returns to Lemnos with Neoptolemus to collect Philoctetes and his bow to join in the Greek efforts at Troy, Philoctetes, though desperate for rescue, is adamant in refusing the rescue these Greeks bring, almost inconceivably preferring to die alone on Lemnos than to go to Troy and help the Atreidae win the war.[7] His resentment makes him deaf even to the promise that at Troy he will be healed of the wound that lames him (1333-5). The reluctance of this exile to accept rescue resembles the confident refusal Prometheus returns to Zeus' coercion. For both exiles the refusal is an act of self-definition against political compulsion. Prometheus will not yield to the evident power of Zeus; he will not rejoin the community of gods, which he abandoned in his championing of humankind. Instead, he chooses to resist, to remain apart and to suffer the torture consequent upon his rebellion. For Philoctetes, there was no initial rebellion that his exile punishes. He is a man distinguished from the Greek warriors, first, by his possession of the powerful bow of Heracles, and then, by his wound, earned by the inadvertent transgression of a god's grove (1326-8). His wound caused him to be expelled from his community; the bow will cause his community to seek him out again. And the drama will turn on persuading this heroic victim/

[7] Knox 1964: 117-8.

victimized hero to return to the community, a reintegration that will both make him whole and his community victorious.

It is Troy specifically to which Philoctetes refuses to go. Again and again he begs for help leaving his island exile to return home to his father.[8] But even when such a homecoming is offered as the distant goal of a journey that must first include Troy, Philoctetes refuses it. Whatever the cost to himself, he will not help the Atreidae take Troy; he will not participate in a Greek victory. The issue for this exile is not simply getting home again. Philoctetes, excluded by the Greeks from participating in their joint assault against Troy, defines himself by his isolation and his survival against odds. Once a warrior who left home intent upon taking Troy, Philoctetes now refuses that possibility and insists on delimiting his journey by his island exile and his home. He refuses glory and even healing; he wants only to return home. It will take the appearance *ex machina* of Heracles, his benefactor and tutelary deity, to compel Philoctetes finally to yield to Neoptolemus and leave his island exile. Only Heracles, who gave him what marks him apart from the community,[9] can convince Philoctetes to use this power to help his fellow warriors to take Troy and, in doing so, to heal himself and to return home.

Troy, in this drama of exile, thus interposes itself as a third and intermediary point between the place of exile and the exile's much-desired home.[10] Or perhaps, as Philoctetes' ambivalent attitude to the land of his exile suggests, Lemnos has become a second home, a sorry place of refuge, which he is eager to exchange for his father's home, but which he is not willing to abandon to go to Troy. As such, exile on Lemnos, interrupting as it does the progress of this hero out to face the challenge of war, and substituting for such heroic efforts the refuge of a home, however rudely realized, threatens to steal from Philoctetes both his heroism and his life.

Lemnos, the island where Philoctetes has endured his exile, is prominent in the poetry of the drama. Description of the island

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[8] 468-506, 995-6, 1367-72, 1392-1401.

[9] Herakles is notable in this context as the hero who stood outside of his community but served its interests when he worked to clear the world of dangerous forces.

[10] Malis near Oeta, but see Kamerbeek 1980: ad 1 for a different locality in *Iliad* 2. 716-7; see Segal's remarks 1981: 347.

home is used to introduce Philoctetes before he himself appears[11] and, in what follows, his relationship to his wild surroundings is used to express, by converse, his relationship to his rescuers and to the community of Greek warriors that they represent.[12]

Before Philoctetes appears, a double, seemingly contradictory picture of the man is created. From Odysseus we hear of a man powerful and dangerous by reason of Heracles' bow, which he wields; a man who can only be taken by deception, not force. But from the evidence of the cave, described first by Neoptolemus and then by the Chorus of his men, a different picture emerges, that of a man alone, living a marginal life made particularly difficult by the wound that was the initial cause of his exile. The chorus, directed to examine the cave to learn of the man, declare quite straightforwardly, "I do myself pity him" (169). Their pity is directed first to his solitary life (170-2), and then to what he must endure from his wound (173-5). They exclaim at the horror of a well-born man forced to endure the privations evident from the cave:

οὗτος πρωτογόνων ἴσως
οἴκων οὐδενὸς ὕστερος,
πάντων ἄμμορος ἐν βίωι
κεῖται μοῦνος ἀπ' ἄλλων
στικτῶν ἢ λασίων μετὰ
θηρῶν, ἔν τ' ὀδύναις ὁμοῦ
λιμῶι τ' οἰκτρὸς ἀνήκεστα μερι-
μνήματ' ἔχων βοᾶι.
ἁ δ' ἀθυρόστομος
ἀχὼ τηλεφανὴς πικρᾶς
οἰμωγᾶς ὕπο χεῖται.

This man comes from a noble
house and is, it seems, second to none,
and yet now he has no portion in anything in life;
he lies alone, apart from others,
together with the spotted or the shaggy beasts
and pitiable in his pain together with his hunger
he cries out, having worries that are incurable.
But ever-babbling echo sounding from a distance
is poured forth by his bitter cries. (180-190)

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[11] For a fuller discussion of this use of setting to introduce the protagonist, see above Chapter 1, pp. 29 ff. and references there.

[12] Segal 1981: 295ff; Vidal-Naquet 1990: 161-179.

From the physical evidence of the cave, the chorus has extrapolated this assessment of Philoctetes' sufferings which will be confirmed by the hero's own laments when he appears (225-9). Their words make of the cave, represented in the theater by the central opening to the *skene*, an emotional focus in the performance, one which represents both Philoctetes' sufferings as a civilized man abandoned to live in the wild and his success in surviving the extreme hardships of that life.

This is the relationship Philoctetes, too, will define between himself and the place of his exile when he encounters Neoptolemus and his men. Outraged to learn that news of his exile has been silenced by those who abandoned him, Philoctetes himself constructs the story of his abandonment and survival on Lemnos that he would have others know. Like the Homeric Odysseus' account of his adventures to the Phaeacians, Philoctetes' tale both constructs his own identity and makes an appeal to these strangers whose help he must seek if he is to return home. He begins by bitterly recalling how the Greeks abandoned him asleep on the shore, leaving beside him only rags and a bit of food (271-5). And he invites Neoptolemus to imagine his dismay on awakening:

> σὺ δή, τέκνον, ποίαν μ' ἀνάστασιν δοκεῖς
> αὐτῶν βεβώτων ἐξ ὕπνου στῆναι τότε;
> ποῖ' ἐκδακρῦσαι, ποῖ' ἀποιμῶξαι κακά;
>
> Now child, what sort of awakening do you imagine I woke to
> from sleep then with those men gone?
> What tears did I cry, what evils did I cry out against?
> (276-8)

The description ironically may have recalled for Sophocles' audience another account of a man abandoned asleep on a strange shore. Odysseus left behind by the Phaeacians in *Odyssey* 13 also awoke on a strange shore to find that he had been abandoned. But beside Odysseus had been left not "rags and a bit of food" but the rich guest-gifts given him by the Phaeacian nobles.[13] And the apparent exile's distress at being abandoned in a strange land was transformed in the *Odyssey* by the arrival of Athena to reveal to him Ithaca and his homecoming. In Sophocles' play the Homeric

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[13] These rags of Philoctetes had earlier been characterized by Odysseus as the lame-man's "treasures" (39).

allusion serves to underline ironically the happier fate of Odysseus and by comparison make what Philoctetes suffered at Odysseus' hands seem more pitiable. But it also serves to problematize the issue of homecoming and the difficulty for someone long separated from home of recognizing this goal when it is presented to him. Just as Odysseus' landing on Ithaca was only the beginning of his necessary battle to retake his house, so will Philoctetes landing on Lemnos prove to be an initial step, through the detour to Troy, towards his own return home.[14]

Philoctetes continues his appeal to his unexpected visitors for sympathy by describing what his life has been since he was marooned:

> ὁ μὲν χρόνος δὴ διὰ χρόνου προὔβαινέ μοι,
> κἄδει τι βαιᾷ τῇδ' ὑπὸ στέγῃ μόνον
> διακονεῖσθαι· γαστρὶ μὲν τὰ σύμφορα
> τόξον τόδ' ἐξηύρισκε, τὰς ὑποπτέρους
> βάλλον πελείας· πρὸς δὲ τοῦθ', ὅ μοι βάλοι
> νευροσπαδὴς ἄτρακτος, αὐτὸς ἂν τάλας
> εἰλυόμην δύστηνον ἐξέλκων πόδα
> πρὸς τοῦτ' ἄν· εἴ τ' ἔδει τι καὶ ποτὸν λαβεῖν,
> καί που πάγου χυθέντος, οἷα χείματι,
> ξύλον τι θραῦσαι, ταῦτ' ἂν ἐξέρπων τάλας
> ἐμηχανώμην· εἶτα πῦρ ἂν οὐ παρῆν,
> ἀλλ' ἐν πέτροισι πέτρον ἐκτρίβων μόλις
> ἔφην' ἄφαντον φῶς, ὃ καὶ σῴζει μ' ἀεί.
> οἰκουμένη γὰρ οὖν στέγη πυρὸς μέτα
> πάντ' ἐκπορίζει πλὴν τὸ μὴ νοσεῖν ἐμέ.

> Time succeeded time for me,
> and it was necessary that I alone act as servant
> in this humble dwelling; for my stomach this bow here
> found the necessaries, shooting down the pigeons
> flying overhead; but to that which the drawn arrow
> struck down, I myself would creep dragging my cursed foot
> towards that thing. And if it were necessary for me to get a drink,
> and it turns out that the stream is frozen, as in winter,
> it was necessary that I break up some wood, then creeping along
> long-suffering I would contrive these things.
> Whenever there was no fire, nevertheless rubbing rock on rock
> with difficulty I would bring forth the hidden light, which
> always preserves me. For a roof to dwell in along with fire
> supplies everything, except that I be free from sickness.
> (285-99)

[14] Neoptolemus explained earlier that Philoctetes had been sequestered on Lemnos by the gods' will, so that he would not take Troy before the city's fated time (192-200).

It is every bit as grim as the chorus had imagined from looking at his cave dwelling. The Greek hero, wounded and abandoned, was by his own account reduced to acting as his own slave, concerned only with shelter and the getting of food and drink (286-7). But there is something else in this description. Philoctetes' account here of the harsh conditions on the island, the absence of any amenity of civilization, is offered with some of the self-satisfaction of a man who has forced sustenance from the elements for himself, by his own cunning. The harshness of conditions serves here not only to build the case against Odysseus and the Atreidae; it is also a measure of Philoctetes' accomplishment in surviving alone, on Lemnos, despite his diseased foot, for some ten years. He has created, from the raw materials of nature the semblance of a civilized life; in his cave, he has created what serves him for a home.[15]

Nevertheless, the rude haven Philoctetes takes some pride in having created out of the wilderness of Lemnos is of course at the same time the place he passionately seeks rescue from. What we do not hear of here, but which emerges later when Philoctetes realizes he has been betrayed by Neoptolemus, is the way in which the harsh landscape of his island prison has become for this crippled hero his only companionship.[16] He calls upon the island to witness the treachery that would steal from him his bow:

> ὦ λιμένες, ὦ προβλῆτες, ὦ ξυνουσίαι
> θηρῶν ὀρείων, ὦ καταρρῶγες πέτραι,
> ὑμῖν τάδ', οὐ γὰρ ἄλλον οἶδ' ὅτωι λέγω,
> ἀνακλαίομαι παροῦσι τοῖς εἰωθόσιν
>
> Havens and headlands, company
> of mountain beasts, jagged rocks,
> to you – for I know of no other to whom I may speak –
> I cry out since you have always been with me. (936-9)[17]

To these unresponsive companions Philoctetes confides his grievance, telling them how Neoptolemus promised to return him to

[15] Unlike Prometheus, who must suffer passively.

[16] As was true of Prometheus; see above, pp. 132.

[17] Kamerbeek 1980: ad 936-7, following Jebb 1898: *ad loc.* notes that ὦ λιμένες (936) means "'bays', 'creeks' rather than 'harbours'". The expression is disturbing, of course, because its more usual meaning is 'harbor' or 'haven', which Philoctetes has denied to the island in his first speech to Neoptolemos (302). Surely the first meaning of the word, that of 'haven' or 'harbor', must nevertheless be implicit in the outcry.

his home but instead took his bow. He bitterly imagines Neoptolemus displaying the bow as a war-prize to the other Achaeans and contemplates his own insubstantial existence that makes him a weak opponent for a warrior (940-9). With this address of Philoctetes to the physical features and wild creatures of his island exile Sophocles gains not simply an opportunity for his protagonist to offer a monologue detailing his perspective of the preceding events. Philoctetes' appeal to the island itself expresses more clearly than his earlier laments or the evidence of his cave his complete isolation from human company, and, because it is delivered in the company of Neoptolemus and his men but ignores them utterly, it dramatizes his rejection of the duplicity of humans in favor of the more trustworthy company of nature.

It is to Neoptolemus, in fact, that this appeal to his wild surroundings is addressed, as is clear when he digresses to plead with the youth. The first ends in despair (950-1) and causes Philoctetes again to turn to the island and address this time the cave that he has made his home, as he pictures for himself the life he will lead now that his bow is taken:

ὦ σχῆμα πέτρας δίπυλον, αὖθις αὖ πάλιν
εἴσειμι πρὸς σὲ ψιλός, οὐκ ἔχων τροφήν·
ἀλλ' αὐανοῦμαι τῶιδ' ἐν αὐλίωι μόνος,
οὐ πτηνὸν ὄρνιν, οὐδὲ θῆρ' ὀρειβάτην
τόξοις ἐναίρων τοισίδ', ἀλλ' αὐτὸς τάλας
θανὼν παρέξω δαῖτ' ἀφ' ὧν ἐφερβόμην,
καί μ' οὓς ἐθήρων πρόσθε θηράσουσι νῦν·
φόνον φόνου δὲ ῥύσιον τείσω τάλας
πρὸς τοῦ δοκοῦντος οὐδὲν εἰδέναι κακόν.

Double-gated form of rock, again to you again
I return stripped, having no means of sustenance;
But I shall wither away alone in this cave
slaying neither winged bird nor mountain-roaming beast
with this bow, but myself miserable, dead, I will offer
a feast for those on whom I have fed,
and those whom I hunted before shall hunt me now.
Poor me, I shall pay death as a reprisal for death
at the hands of one who appeared to know no evil. (952-60)

The passage recalls and balances the earlier account Philoctetes offered to Neoptolemus of his life on Lemnos since Odysseus and the Atreidae had abandoned him there (285-316). Now, in a no less direct appeal to Neoptolemus' pity, he foretells the harsh life and inevitable death he will suffer with the loss of his bow. What

is striking in his description, however, is the notion of a natural reciprocity that denies any difference, now, between this human and the wild creatures that inhabit the island: as he has killed for food so shall he become food for other creatures. The measure of civilized life that Philoctetes has managed to eke out on Lemnos is, with the loss of his bow, now abandoned and Philoctetes claims no distance separating him from the animals.

The island is for Philoctetes a prison, certainly, from which he seeks desperately to escape, but it also becomes his haven when he is confronted with the treachery of man.[18] When his rescuers will not take him home, but insist that he go first with them to Troy, he chooses to remain in exile. He will leave Lemnos for his father's home or he will remain there and die among those places and creatures with whom he has lived now for so many years.[19] It is a baffling choice. The cave is both his refuge and his tomb; the wild animals both his companions and his killers. Philoctetes recoils from human treachery to take refuge in nature which is innocent of such guile, but his retreat must, as he himself sees, inevitably cause his own death.

Nor is he swayed from it by the prophecy Neoptolemus relates to him of the cure for his diseased foot and the glory that awaits him in Troy (1326-35). And he says it is not resentment for the past that makes him refuse to help the Atreidae win the war, but rather some vaguely defined fear of future wrongs they may inflict on him (1358-62).

Philoctetes' adamant refusal, against self-interest, to go to Troy, his decision to remain at Lemnos if Neoptolemus will not take him home, is an attempt to substitute one haven for another. His refusal to risk being unjustly treated again is, as it must be, a refusal of life, and so it is that he retreats to his cave anticipating his own death there. It is a decision that is contrary to fate: his fate, the fate of Troy, and contrary as well to the necessary conditions of life, in particular, life lived in the society of other people. Thus

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18 Outside of Philoctetes' words the island is also perceived as a place profoundly attractive as a retreat. Note the unexpectedly idyllic image in the parados of Echo attending to Philoctetes' cries of woe (188-90 [quoted above], see Jebb 1898: 235f. on textual problems here and Kamerbeek 1980: *ad loc.*), or the pleasant impression Odysseus' description of the cave must convey. Segal 1981: 324 touches on this aspect of the descriptive passages.

19 Seale 1972: 94-102; Taplin 1971: 35-7 discusses the multiple endings of the play.

it is that Philoctetes' divine mentor steps in to redirect the action, compelling Philoctetes to end his exile and rejoin the community of warriors as a condition to returning finally home.

Heracles orders Philoctetes to Troy by drawing a parallel between his own and Philoctetes' destinies.[20]

> καὶ πρῶτα μέν σοι τὰς ἐμὰς λέξω τύχας,
> ὅσους πονήσας καὶ διεξελθὼν πόνους
> ἀθάνατον ἀρετὴν ἔσχον, ὡς πάρεσθ' ὁρᾶν.
> καὶ σοί, σάφ' ἴσθι, τοῦτ' ὀφείλεται παθεῖν,
> ἐκ τῶν πόνων τῶνδ' εὐκλεᾶ θέσθαι βίον.

> First I will tell you my fate,
> how many labors I have labored at and endured
> to have immortal merit, as you are able to see.
> As for you, be well advised, that it is incumbent upon you
> to endure this, to get a well-famed life out of these labors.
> (1418-22)

What Philoctetes has suffered and what he must undertake at Troy is compared to the πόνοι of Heracles that won him glory and immortality.[21] Heracles outlines specifically what it is that Philoctetes must do. First he is to go to Troy, be cured of his cruel disease (1424) and then be judged the best of the Greek warriors, killing Paris, "who was the cause of these evils" (1426) with Heracles' own bow (1425-7). To his fathers and his fathers' home he is to send the spoils of Troy and the sign of his *aristeia* within the army (1429-30). Heracles concludes by enjoining Philoctetes to dedicate on his pyre some spoils from the war as a "memento of my bow," (1431-3). Heracles is remarkably specific here, detailing a programme for Philoctetes that takes him from Lemnos to victory to thanksgiving. What is striking is the absence of any mention of Philoctetes' own homecoming to his father and his fatherland. In its place, he is told that he will send spoils home — evidence of his success — but of his own homecoming nothing is said.

This hero, for whom going home was everything and who had refused to consider going to Troy even as a necessary condition to winning his way home again, now turns toward Troy without any thought of his homecoming. It may be that home is

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[20] See Kamerbeek 1980: *ad loc.* and Webster 1970: *ad loc.*

[21] On ἀθάνατον ἀρετήν at 1420 see Kamerbeek 1980: *ad loc.* and Webster 1970: *ad loc.*

to be the end of Philoctetes' journey after all, but not until he has gone to Troy and there won glory and spoils.[22] But for a time that goal is set aside and Troy becomes not an intolerable detour between the exile and return home, but the essential part of this journey. In the parallel Heracles draws with his own career, it is this journey to Troy that becomes the necessary journey of a hero beyond the security of the home to endure and to conquer, to prove himself and to win glory. Just as Philoctetes is made to recognize that the bow which he received from Heracles is destined for more than killing birds, so he accepts his own heroic destiny.[23]

Heracles is equally clear about Neoptolemus' fate, insisting for this youth on his necessary partnership with Philoctetes and warning of the need for piety in conquering Troy (1432-41). As these two warriors depart from Lemnos to fufill their joint fate as conquerers of Troy, Philoctetes says farewell to the companions of his exile that he now abandons.[24] Calling upon the cave and nymphs, the headlands and the spring, he now recalls his past sufferings and invokes the island as a god, asking for a fair voyage:

> χαῖρ', ὦ Λήμνου πέδον ἀμφίαλον,
> καί μ' εὐπλοίαι πέμψον ἀμέμπτως,
> ἔνθ' ἡ μεγάλη Μοῖρα κομίζει,
> γνώμη τε φίλων χὠ πανδαμάτωρ
> δαίμων, ὃς ταῦτ' ἐπέκρανεν.
>
> Farewell, land of Lemnos surrounded by the sea,
> And send me with a fair sailing blamelessly,
> There where the great Destiny provides for me,
> and the judgement of friends and the all-taming
> god, who brought these things to pass. (1464-8)

The conclusion to the play looks forward as it moves Philoctetes from stagnant isolation into heroic combat, but Philoctetes' thoughts remain, if only briefly, on the island home that he leaves behind. The place that has been a witness and a companion to him in his lonely suffering is now abandoned, but not without a fine appreciation of its beauty or regrets for the refuge it has offered. As his exile ends Philoctetes has no thought for

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22 Segal 1981: 347.
23 Knox 1964: 140.
24 Whitman 1951: 188-9; Knox 1964: 141. Much of the ambiguity lies in the adverb ἀμέμπτως (1465) which can be either active or passive in meaning.

home. Instead he exchanges the refuge and prison of Lemnos for the field of action before Troy. Philoctetes' exile ends not as he makes his way back to his father's house, but when he rejoins the community of Greek warriors. Home may stand as the distant goal of this hero's adventures, but more crucial for Sophocles is not return home, but return to community.

For the *Philoctetes*, Sophocles has relied upon extensive descriptions of his protagonist's island to characterize Philoctetes' own ambivalence to his exile and, more broadly, to delineate both the attractions that disengagement from society holds and, balanced against that, the more profound suffering such isolation must bring. He uses setting throughout the play for exposition of this theme, and depends upon it initially to introduce the play's characters and, more especially, their conflict, and to prepare the audience's response to that conflict.

The extensive use of setting here is one obvious characteristic that the *Philoctetes* shares with the *Oedipus Coloneus* and that distinguishes these late plays of Sophocles.[25] But there is another connection that may in part account for the extensive reliance on details of scenery for the development of the plays' thematic complexity. For the *Coloneus* too is concerned with exile, with the loss of home and with the regaining of home, and with all that process has to do with defining the identity of the hero.

Oedipus, an exemplary exile

Oedipus is perhaps the hero who most clearly exemplifies the crucial connection of the hero with his home. This cerebral hero, who was to save Thebes twice by solving a riddle of identity, himself suffers precisely because he falsely identifies himself and his relationship to that place. It is an error unexampled in the epic tradition, but one that reflects by converse traditional norms of defining identity, by place of birth and by parentage. His story, as it emerges in the *Tyrannus*, is a gruesome remake of the hero's journey that ends ultimately not in the hero's sure possession of his home and identity, but in exile.[26] Setting out for Thebes, precisely because he believes it is not his home, this youth

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[25] Campbell 1881: I, 261-2 offers a particularly useful comparison of these plays; see also Seale 1972: 94-102; Vidal-Naquet 1990: 165-6.

[26] Froma Zeitlin 1986: 130-167.

encounters not some criminals or monsters, as Theseus had, on his road to his father's palace and recognition of his own noble birth; instead, he meets his own father and slays him. It is an act that, through Apollo's oracle, is a confirmation of his identity, but this significance of the murder Oedipus too long fails to recognize. Returning home to Thebes, where he believes himself to be in exile, he rescues the city and wins a throne and a bride for himself. And again, there is no recognition to redeem this hero from relations with his mother—and again, that failure of recognition confirms, through Apollo's oracle, the hero's identity. Recognition, when it finally comes, brings to Oedipus loss of those usual definers of identity: his father, whom he recognizes he has killed, and his mother, who kills herself when she recognizes their crime, and of his home, from which, by his own curse, he is exiled.

Oedipus' exile becomes a metaphor for this alienation of identity. So that when, at the beginning of the *Oedipus at Colonus*, an old and tired Oedipus is led by Antigone to a resting place in an unidentified grove, we find that he speaks not from his peculiar identity, but as one who belongs to a large, undifferentiated class of exiles:

> Τέκνον τυφλοῦ γέροντος Ἀντιγόνη, τίνας
> χώρους ἀφίγμεθ' ἢ τίνων ἀνδρῶν πόλιν;
> τίς τὸν πλανήτην Οἰδίπουν καθ' ἡμέραν
> τὴν νῦν σπανιστοῖς δέξεται δωρήμασιν,
> σμικρὸν μὲν ἐξαιτοῦντα, τοῦ σμικροῦ δ' ἔτι
> μεῖον φέροντα, καὶ τόδ' ἐξαρκοῦν ἐμοί;

> Daughter of a blind old man, Antigone, what
> country have we come to or to what city?
> Who will receive the wanderer Oedipus today
> with scanty gifts? Little do I seek
> and still less do I receive, and with this much
> I am satisfied. (1-6)

If his name or Antigone's were omitted there would be nothing here to distinguish this wanderer from wanderers as a group. He defines his condition pathetically, certainly, but without reference (except perhaps the "blind" of line 1) to the peculiar horrors of his personal history. So also when the Colonian stranger pleads with him to vacate the grove in which he has stopped to rest. Making no claim on the place, but desiring only a place to rest,

Oedipus seems ready to accede to the Colonían gentleman's request. But first he wants to know what gods the grove is dedicated (38 ff.). Only when the grove is given identity, as belonging to the Eumenides, does Oedipus begin to speak with a voice that has its source in his own distinct knowledge of himself. And he does so by refusing to be driven from this place of the Eumenides, as he was once exiled from Thebes.

Oedipus derives from the grove's identity the knowledge that he will soon find rest in that place and be "a prize to those who had given him a home; a curse to those who drove him out" (92-3). What had been a temporary haven in an exile's endless journey is now recognized as a place of permanent rest. Linked not by birth but by Apollo's oracle, the exiled Oedipus asserts a claim of sorts to this place. Oedipus has found a new home that replaces the old and now seeks only the agreement of Theseus to claim a place in Athenian Colonus and to give it in death the daemonic power that has been granted him. But before this hero is allowed to take his permanent place in the sacred precinct at Colonus, he must face challenges from some who would keep him from ending his exile and finding a home. The Colonians, horrified at his infamous history, are prepared to break the promise of protection they have given this suppliant and drive him from their city. His own Theban kinsmen, each in order to strengthen his own hold on that city of Oedipus' birth, would force Oedipus to return to a place of permanent exile just beyond the boundaries of Thebes.

Oedipus' initial refusal to leave the grove and his desire to speak to the king of Athens on a matter that, as he cryptically suggests, will benefit them both (70-4), encourages the chorus of Colonians to seek out this man and discover his identity after they have persuaded him to leave the sacred ground under a promise of protection. The Colonians compel a reluctant Oedipus to retell the lurid facts of his past, which serves not only as a reprise of his history, but allows Oedipus to problematize his guilt for these crimes. But they, in horror at finding the protagonist of this well-known tale in their midst, demand that he leave their city, perpetuating a cruel reiteration of Oedipus' initial exile from Thebes. But before this suppliant is driven from Colonus, Theseus arrives to welcome the exile and promise him a safe haven, in life and death, in the Athenian town.

The threat posed by the Colonians' dismay at Oedipus' identity is soon displaced by Theseus' generous acceptance of the exile. But with the arrival of Creon, it becomes evident that Oedipus in life requires from Theseus the protection that he himself promises to Athens after his death. Creon's insistence that he has come not to harm Oedipus but to rescue him from exile and return him to his home ignores the haven Oedipus has won and insists on treating Oedipus once again as an exile longing for return home.

Supplication and exile, narrative patterns that are closely allied in their dependence on spatial oppositions, become here confused, as Sophocles moves to redefine Oedipus by exploiting and inverting the usual association of home with heroic identity. It is a strategy that begins when Oedipus claims a haven in the Eumenides' grove but one that depends most heavily on the agonistic encounters of Oedipus and his protector Theseus with those representatives of his birth-home, who now have come to "rescue" this exile. The exile, excluded from Thebes by his own crimes, becomes a suppliant when he recognizes his fate in the Eumenides' grove. The impossible desire of returning home, implicit in the exile's condition, becomes for Oedipus now a desire to be granted a new home at Colonus. The poles of heroic identity are reversed as Athenian Colonus becomes the locus of Oedipus' self and of his daemonic power. Thebes, the hero's birth-home, not only is denied any claims on Oedipus, but becomes in the action of the drama the source of threats to Oedipus' realization of his fate. The unexpected inversion in the fortunes of a blind beggar is given expression in this drama in part through the transformation of the exile's home into an alien place of hostile aggression and of the foreign Colonus into a secure locus of identity.

Like Odysseus in the *Philoctetes*, Creon and later Polyneices seek out the exile to serve their own interests, and, like Philoctetes, Oedipus refuses repatriation on the terms offered by these kinsmen. The anger and the resentment expressed by both Philoctetes and Oedipus reflect the disaffection of each exile from his community. But there is a difference, too, that accounts for the significantly different resolutions given to either tale. For Philoctetes, acceptance of the Greeks' offer carries with it the promise that he will be cured of what sets him apart from his community. By using his peculiar power to serve the Greeks' interests at Troy, Philoctetes will be made whole again, an event that announces

both his reintegration into the larger Greek community and his ability to return home again. But Oedipus cannot, of course, be cured of his cursed past. Indeed, it is this past that is the source of his identity and, it seems, of the peculiar power that is to inform his death. And so it is that he cannot ultimately reclaim a place in any community. To some significant degree, because of who he is, Oedipus must always exist apart from any communal group. Creon attempts to force him and Polyneices to persuade him to return to serve what each defines as the communal good, but for this service, he is to be given no place in Thebes itself, but brought only to its borders. At Athens he is welcomed to stay and this place he will bless with his daimonic powers. But he seeks no admission to the community of Colonians; here the place he claims is a place apart, within the sacred precinct of Colonus, but unseen and unknown by all but the king.

The grove of the Eumenides, in which Oedipus first recognized his promised respite from endless wandering, becomes at the play's end the gateway to this hidden place that Oedipus will occupy forever. In the *Colonus*, Sophocles brings Oedipus home to a new place of identity. The spatial opposition that typically defines the hero's journey, "home" and "away," here are reversed in a significant expression of the poet's redefinition of this hero. Oedipus' birth-home which once defined him by rejecting him, first at birth and later when he was an adult, is now itself denied as Oedipus refuses rescue from the wanderings that have brought him finally to Athens and to his rest. Just as Corinth had once received and given a new identity to the baby exiled to Cithaeron, so also in Sophocles' late play does Athens become home for this hero, in a redefinition of Oedipus' identity that reflects ultimately on the identity of the city and deme which Sophocles represents. For Oedipus the opposition of home and exile is problematic in representing this hero, who, more than any other, defines himself by transforming these categories.

Much has been written about details of setting in this play. Indeed, it is one of the few surviving plays in which verbally described setting is allowed to be of importance.[27] Sophocles has exploited Oedipus' blindness at the beginning of the play to give

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[27] It is perhaps not insignificant that others in which setting is noticeably important are the exile dramas, *Philoctetes* and *Prometheus Bound*.

an occasion for Antigone to describe both the Colonian grove and the sight of Athens looming in the distance. And the messenger who tells of Oedipus' final minutes in the grove continues to enrich the verbal definition of the space unseen by the audience. Descriptions of the Eumenides' grove, its verdant spaces seen from the outside at the play's beginning and from within its mysterious interior in the end, frame the action of the play. The association of this place with Oedipus is made explicit early in the play by the linkage of the oracle, and it is easy to see in the context rich with undisclosed promise and threat, a physical analog of Oedipus who holds within himself the promise of much good. In much the same way the settings of the *Prometheus Bound* and of the *Philoctetes* function to define the physical and psychological landscape of the exile's isolation. The rocky landscape and harsh weather that torture Prometheus have a close connection with the cruel environment that Philoctetes battles to survive on Lemnos. The same might be said of the use of spatial oppositions to shape the *Oedipus at Colonus.* Sophocles has joined, in his construction of this possibly original narrative, the suppliant to the exile paradigms, uniting the two in the almost mythic Athens. This place, transformed in Apollo's oracle, ceases to be a place of exile for Oedipus, as it makes a place for this horrifying old man, even as it once found a place for the Dread Goddesses.

CONCLUSION

A PLACE APART

By bringing this tragic hero with his promise of daemonic power to his own city and deme, Sophocles in the *Oedipus at Colonus* has made the challenge of Oedipus' problematic history and Theseus' generous response enact Athens' view of itself as a haven for refugees. Continuity between the dramatic myth and the reality of its audience is implied in the promise Oedipus offers to those who take him in, as in the *aition* for the hero's cult, but it is the identity of place, the Colonus of the drama and the Colonus of the playwright, the Athens of Theseus and the Athens of the dramatic performance, that insists upon the connection between the fiction and the audience. In this strategy for joining performance to myth through a shared setting Sophocles has followed the practice of cult hymns, which commonly link the god to the cult and the celebrants to the god through a narrative recounting of the god's birth or the origins of his cult. In the *Hymn to Delian Apollo,* the account of Apollo's birth on Delos celebrates both the god whose history is being sung and the Delians who sing. What joins the narrative to the performance is Delos itself, at once the place of Apollo's birth celebrated in song and the place of the celebratory singing. In the narrative, the island herself, personified, welcomes Leto and gives her a place to bear her son (51-83). The island's joyous reception of the mother and then of the child, recounted in the narrative, celebrates the god, celebrates as well the place that received him, and links the island's ancient act of benevolence to the present celebration of the Delians and their appeal for continued prosperity from the god. In a similar way, the identity of place in the *Oedipus at Colonus* links the earlier generosity of Theseus to the poet's Athenian audience. The play becomes the enactment of an historical deed of benevolence, as the fictive Colonus, recognizeable as a real place within the city but beyond its walls, becomes as well a space into which Athenian ideals may be projected.

But the identity of cult and celebratory story is not complete in

this or in any tragedy. The identity of narrative and performance locales, of the Delos of Apollo's birth with the Delos of those celebrating that event, is necessary for the celebratory function of the hymn. But the tale that brings Oedipus to Colonus to be received and protected by Athens was not a part of that hero's festival, but was entered into the tragic competition at the festival of Dionysus and was performed in that god's *temenos* at the base of the acropolis. The *aition* for the Colonian cult inexplicably becomes part of the celebration of Dionysus.

The displacement evident here, of narrative locale from performance place, was characteristic enough of tragedy for a proverb to have arisen to describe it, "Nothing to do with Dionysus."[1] Tragedy in the fifth century was a genre localized at Athens and associated with the celebration of Dionysus alone, and yet Dionysus was rarely the subject of the tragic enactments nor Athens their fictive locale. When Aeschylus celebrated the Greek victory against Xerxes, he locates the tragedy, as Phrynicus had, not close to home, but at the Persian court. And when he concludes his *Oresteia* trilogy at Athens, it is on the Aeropagus, before Athena's, not Dionysus' temple. When Euripides celebrates Athens' ideal of autochthony in the *Ion*, he locates the dramatic action at Delphi and makes Athens in the play a distant mythic locus. Even in the *Oedipus at Colonus* Sophocles has Oedipus remain beyond the walls of the city and brings Theseus out to meet him. There is in tragedy — and in this tragedy differs from other ritual forms — always a space created between the fictive setting and the setting of the performance in Dionysus' precinct at Athens.

It is a space defined in the imaginations of the playwright's audience, bounded at one end by the fictive locus and at the other by the real place in which the audience situates itself. The topography of the theater, with its distinct and opposed spaces for audience and actors, is an expression of these logical boundaries. The place of fiction, visually defined through most of the century by *skene, logeion* and *orchestra,* is physically distinct from the place of the audience, the *theatron* proper. From this position the audience — or viewers, to use the Greek idiom — may see the fiction and judge it. The spatial demarcation is reinforced by the masks,

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[1] See the discussion of the ancient adage, "Nothing to do with Dionysus," in the introduction to Winkler and Zeitlin 1990: 3-11 and references there.

which do not, as theatrical make-up since has sought to do, deceive the eye, fooling the viewer into seeing something or someone who is not there. Instead these masks, like the structures of the god's theater, mark the fictive status of the enactment and distinguish most clearly character from actor and actor from audience.

But even as the physical realities of the stage structures and masks define the distance separating theatrical fiction from theatrical performance, other characteristic elements of the ancient theater invite the spectator to cross this logical division. The chorus, selected from the citizenry but participating in the fiction, takes its place in the orchestra between actor and audience. Both because those in it belong in reality among those who sit in the *theatron* and because within the fiction it is made to take on a communal identity, the chorus, much more than the actors, is positioned to encourage identification by the audience. This identification of chorus and audience, by no means certain in tragedy, nevertheless is reinforced by the usual practice of the poets of defining the acting area within the drama as some public place, such as the area in front of a palace or a temple. The chorus within the fiction may function as the public who come to such places; the audience is in fact such a public as they sit in Dionysus' precinct attending his festival. For tragedy is, in the end, public ritual performance. And the audience are participants, if not in the enactment of the tragic fiction, then in the celebration of the city's god who calls for such productions. Like the Ionians described at the conclusion to the *Hymn to Delian Apollo* celebrating the god in song and dance and boxing (146 ff.), the Athenians in Dionysus' theater participate themselves in a celebration both of Dionysus and of their community.

The precinct of Dionysus, with its theater constructed for the god's festival, becomes a place within Athens but apart from it, a place from which the city may be held up for scrutiny, rethought, recreated. The spatial opposition of fictive and performance space created through the mimetic processes of tragedy recreate in performance the antinomy of home and not-home that underlies so many of the traditional narratives on which the tragedians draw for their plots. Alienation from home and return define the experience of tragedy, even as it defines the *nostos* of Odysseus or the exile of Medea. Through the fiction of the tragedy, the audience is

imaginatively removed from Athens to a position from which the city, her institutions and ideals, may be interrogated. And yet Athens remains the context of the communal festival and the secure position from which such self-inquiries may be pursued. Just as the god of tragedy is said to be a dissolver of boundaries, himself both Greek and foreign, so tragedy at once demands that the community remain secure within its boundaries and at the same time leave those enclosures to reconsider the boundaries of civic ideology by which they defined themselves.

Tragedy distinguishes itself from earlier narrative poetry through the mimesis of character and of space. Tragic characters are announced through the mask which the actors wear and change as needed throughout the play, as also in the words of the tragedy. Tragic space is similarly defined in the structures of the stage and in the tragic texts. The fictive locus of tragedy is merely superimposed descriptively over the place of tragic enactment in Dionysus' theater. But by the processes of tragic mimesis this bit of public space at Athens becomes for a time a place apart from the city and a place where the city, its civic processes and ideals, becomes the subject of the tragic poets' art.

APPENDIX

THE PHYSICAL REPRESENTATION OF SETTING IN THE FIFTH-CENTURY THEATER AN OVERVIEW

In drama the verbally defined setting is visually reinforced by the movement of the actors and by whatever definition is given to the acting area. Thus in order to provide, as it were, a background for the discussion of narrative setting in Greek tragedy, I have summarized relevant parts of the ongoing debate over the physical attributes of the fifth century theater.[1] Limitations in the evidence present two obstacles to resolution of the debate. The first and central difficulty arises from the absence in the physical and literary remains of any indication of the connection between the narrative setting in the texts and its physical representation in the theater.[2] The problem is particularly vexed because so little evidence — and none that is uncontroversial — survives outside the texts. To what extent was realism required by the conventions of Greek tragedy? Over the last century most scholars have assumed that visual realism was a goal of the theater and technology the limiting factor in achieving it.[3] A dissenting voice was raised over twenty years ago by Peter Arnott, who challenged the assumption of a realistic convention for tragedy and contended "not only that realistic scenery is unnecessary but that in its greatest and most productive periods the theatre has discarded it."[4] Far from being limited by a theater of restricted scenic capabilities, tragedy, according to Arnott, derived particular power from its reliance on

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[1] This summary does not reflect a thorough search of the vast bibliography or an original re-examination of the (exiguous) evidence, but rather is a synthesis of the major works that deal comprehensively with the subject. The most thorough and reasonable evaluation of the evidence is A. W. Pickard-Cambridge 1946. Since its publication many of the views it expresses have been challenged and in some cases overturned, but it remains the best source for this study. Of more recent works, Ruth Padel 1990: 336-65 is excellent, although she is far more optimistic about what can be known from the available evidence than I.

[2] C.f. Seale 1982: 22-23.

[3] C.f. Melchinger 1974: 101-2.

[4] Arnott 1962: 93.

"verbal scene painting."[5] Within the gaps of evidence the debate over realism in the theater continues to reflect more the individual scholar's own assumption about what is "necessary" for a production, than any sure truth about the fifth-century theater.

The lack of evidence also makes it very difficult to assess the development that we may reasonably assume was taking place in the theater throughout the fifth century. In assessing the nature of the fifth-century acting area scholars begin with the physical remains of the fourth and later centuries,[6] testimony by Aristotle, Vitruvius, a first century B.C. architect, and others no earlier than he; the results of that endeavor are then tested against the evidence of the plays themselves—the most relevant evidence, but evidence difficult to interpret. All that is known, taken together, yields a synchronous picture of the theatrical resources of the late fifth century. It is a misleading picture, to be sure, but we cannot know how or to what extent.

Nevertheless, if there is much that we cannot know, much about which we must speculate and make assumptions, the basic structure of the theater, at least, is clear. The Theater of Dionysus, the site for which most of the fifth- century tragedies were created,[7] is thought to have been equipped in the fifth century with wooden structures; none of stone has survived.[8] Whether such structures were built to endure for the life of the wood, or whether they were temporary and reerected each year for the Greater Dionysia,[9] they would be in place for all the plays at a single festival, and so satyr drama and comedy, as well as tragedy, are sources for our estimation of the nature of these structures.

The orchestra is perhaps the only feature of the theater which

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[5] Arnott 1962: 26.

[6] Good surveys of this are provided by Travlos 1971: 537-551 and Wycherly 1978: 203-218.

[7] Arnott 1962: 21 suggests "that the poet wrote, as far as he knew, for one production only, for which he would himself be responsible, and so had the stage setting constantly before his mind ... The poet was his own producer, and we may therefore reasonably assume a constant scenic awareness." This may go too far. Notable exceptions to Arnott's dictum are the *Andromache*, which is said by a scholium (ad 445) never to have been performed in Athens; the *Bacchae* was composed in Macedonia, with what view to production is not known. See Stevens 1971: 15-21 and Dodd 1960: xxxix-xl.

[8] Pickard-Cambridge 1946: 68; Arnott 1962: 8-10; Hourmouziades 1965: 1-3; Dover 1972: 18; Dearden 1976: 19.

[9] Pickard-Cambridge 1946: 122 assumes a temporary structure, but see Hourmouziades' discussion 1965: 1ff.

is of unchallenged antiquity. This circular dancing floor, thought by some to have originated in a threshing floor, is the minimum physical setting conceded by all scholars to have been available to even the earliest tragedy. Still debated in the absence of strong evidence, however, is when the raised stage (λογεῖον) and the architectural facade that serves as a backdrop for the action and a sounding board for the voices (σκηνή), were introduced into the theater.

Vitruvius includes the *logeion* in his description of the Greek theater, explaining that it was so called because that was where tragic and comic actors performed.[10] In the same passage he gives the height of the stage as not less than ten feet or more than twelve.[11] implying a marked separation of the chorus in the orchestra from the actors mounted on the *logeion*. An absolute separation, however, is contradicted by plays that are thought to require easy passage from the orchestra to the *logeion* (e.g., *Eumenides, Helen* [331]), which has caused some scholars to postulate the absence of a stage or a stage of negligible height in the fifth century.[12] This position is now being questioned by many scholars, however, and many believe, with Arnott, "that a raised stage, though of less than Vitruvian dimensions, existed at the time of the earliest recorded drama."[13] Adduced as evidence is the strong tradition of a raised stage in vase painting and in references and descriptions of subsequent centuries.[14] Further, the plays themselves seem to suggest a characteristic, though by no means absolute, separation of chorus and actors;[15] and, Arnott deduces that the

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[10] "ideo quod apud eos tragici et comici actores in scaena peragunt." Vitruvius *On Architecture*, ed. and trans. Frank Granger, Loeb Classical Library (London and New York 1931) V 7.2.

[11] V 7.2.

[12] Pickard-Cambridge 1946: 69, *passim* is quite adamant in denying any possibility of a raised stage for the fifth century; he finds evidence for the close interaction of actors and chorus in many plays, see his detailed discussions of the "Evidence of the Plays" (pp. 30-68). Arnott 1962: 34-41 answers these arguments.

[13] Arnott 1962: 4; Pickard-Cambridge 1946: 74 had dismissed this theory in a brief note.

[14] Dearden 1976: 13 has a good discussion of this evidence; see also Arnott 1962: 6-8.

[15] Arnott 1962: 36-40 points to "clumsy" passages and shows how they are explained by a restriction on the chorus mounting a raised stage; he discusses *Philoctetes* (822), *Hippolytus* (565), *Orestes* (142), *Electra* (Euripides', 218). Hourmouziades 1965: 65-74 discusses the evidence from Euripides; see also

logeion was noticeably elevated from the definition of spatial relations within a number of plays. The Danaids of Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women* seem to take refuge at a place raised above the rest of the acting area (πάγος 188; 508). Io in the *Prometheus Bound* threatens to throw herself from the rocks, as Sophocles' Philoctetes does also; both incidents suggest that the stage was elevated from the orchestra, giving visual reinforcement to the threats. For the *Philoctetes* the elevation of the *logeion* from the orchestra seems guaranteed by Neoptolemos' explicit identification of the cave as above the 'shore' where Odysseus stands (28-9).[16] Arnott concludes by suggesting in the fifth century there was a stage of some four feet[17] with access between the orchestra and the stage provided by a central stairway. It is of course unlikely to have remained precisely the same throughout the fifth century, nor is there evidence for the specific height he proposes, but his is a tentative solution that is most consistent with all of the extant plays.

If this theory is correct, the *logeion* was sometimes used to give spatial definition to the dramatic setting. We can be more confident in assigning such a role to the *skene*. The term refers to the scene-building that abutted the acting area. Its interior supplied a place for the actors to change costume and, when such came to be used, a place to store scenery and stage properties; its facade supplied the backdrop to the *logeion*. Within the plays, the *skene* might be used as the exterior of a palace[18] or a temple (as in about two thirds of the extant works), or even, in a few notable cases, a cave.[19] The earliest example that we have for the *skene* being used

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Dale 1969b: 258; Dearden 1976: 15-18; Mastronarde 1979: 32-34.

[16] Evidence from comedy is reviewed by Dearden 1976: 14-18. I do not understand why he excludes the value of *Wasps* 1341-44, discussed by Dover 1972: 18 as evidence of some elevation of the stage, because it "can be interpreted in an obscene sense" (14).

[17] Arnott 1962: 41. This figure seems intended as a compromise between the 10-12' Vitruvius gives and the very low stage Pickard-Cambridge advocates. It is noteworthy that this is about the height of modern stages. Dearden 1976: 18, apparently following Arnott, offers the same figure with the explanation that this height is sufficient "to raise the actors a little over the chorus without destroying the rapport between them."

[18] T. B. L. Webster's conclusion from this 1956: 1-2 should not be uncritically embraced: "The normal set ... was a palace front, and so the normal convention was that the audience were the citizens, sitting round the market place to watch the royal family conducting its affairs."

[19] The cave is thought to have been the characteristic setting of satyr dramas, but it cannot have been exclusively so, as the fragments of the

as an architectural facade is the *Oresteia* (458), where in the course of the trilogy it functions successively as the palace of Agamemnon at Argos, the temple of Apollo at Delphi, and the Court of the Areopagos at Athens. Scholars are divided as to whether the *Oresteia* should be thought to mark the introduction of the *skene* or whether we are instead to understand this feature of setting as present, though unmentioned, in the earlier productions of the *Seven* and *Persians*. Wilamowitz was the first, to my knowledge, to point out that the *skene* was unmentioned and unrequired for entrances and exits in these plays (as well as in the *Suppliant Women*, which at that time was thought to be the earliest extant work). He concluded that the *skene* was introduced between the latest of these early plays, which he took to be the *Seven* in 467, and the *Oresteia* in 458.[20] Oliver Taplin, who follows Wilamowitz, and who wishes to strengthen his argument for the originality of Aeschylus, goes so far as to suggest that the *Oresteia* was the first work to make use of the *skene*.[21] The argument, whatever its appeal, is nevertheless *ex silentio*. We need not assume that the *skene* did not exist because it goes unmentioned in the text and in the apparent action of the pre-*Oresteia* plays. In the absence of evidence, we can only make a subjective judgement about the relative interdependence of the visual and the imagined in Greek dramatic productions.

Some basic characteristics of the *skene* can be deduced from the plays. It had at least one central door, often used for entrances and exits. Not uncommonly, the *skene* is identified implicitly within the context of a play by who comes from it or leaves to go into it (e.g. Oedipus leaving what presumably is the palace in the *OT*.[22]) None of the extant tragedies requires more than one door,[23] but

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Isthmiastai suggest; see Arnott 1962: 5.

20 1935: 148-172.

21 1977: Appendix C, 452-9.

22 The *skene* as palace is implied at 1-2, 8, 15-16; see Hourmouziades 1965: 7-8.

23 Pickard-Cambridge 1946: 43 favors three doors, even for tragedy, and thinks that they may have been used in *Choephoroe* (but see Dale 1969c: 120), *Eumenides* and *Alcestis*, but admits that they are not essential to these productions. Arnott 1962: 42 concludes that one door is the bare minimum, but points to the *Cyclops* as a work that seems to require two. Hourmouziades 1965: 15-25, discussing the evidence from Euripides, admits there is no necessity of more than one door, but "a few scenes suggest the possibility of other, subsidiary openings."

some comedies of Aristophanes, written presumably with the same theater in mind, suggest that more than one door was present in the *skene* and presumably could be used in tragic as well as comic performances or ignored as needed.[24] In addition to the doors necessary for entrances and exits, the *skene* also must have had a flat roof on which, for example, the watchman of the *Agamemnon* or Bdelykleon in the *Wasps* could lie. Medea must have made her escape out of Corinth from the roof of the *skene,* and many deities who are said to appear aloft may have been standing here rather than flying in on the *mechane.*[25] And although the *Wasps* suggests the *skene* had a second story from which Philokleon lowers himself, the height of the structure must been low enough to allow an actor, as perhaps Evadne in Euripides' *Suppliant Women,* to leap to the ground safely.[26] Arnott suggests a height of about eight feet.[27]

For most of the period from which complete tragedies survive the orchestra, *logeion,* and *skene* were the fixtures of the acting area.[28] These same physical structures confronted the audience for each play. Some adaptation for particular plays was possible by the addition of a (moveable?) stage altar (this is not to be confused with the real, sacrificial altar of Dionysus that stood in the middle of the orchestra), which would stand on the *logeion* to one side of the door(s).[29] Arnott suggests that in addition to serving as the altar that is the focus of so many plays, this prop may also have doubled as a tomb for the *Persians* or *Helen,*[30] or even as Oedipus'

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24 This has been a source of lively controversy for comedy ever since Dale 1957: 205ff. suggested the comic possibilities of staging *Wasps* before a single door. Dearden 1976: 19-30 substantially follows her, arguing for a single door in the fifth century. Dover 1972: 21-24, however, resists this suggestion.

25 Pickard-Cambridge 1946: 128 and in individual discussions of the plays, 30-68; Arnott 1962: 42-3; Hourmouziades 1965: 29-34 adds the notion of a communicating door between the interior of the *skene* and the roof ; Taplin 1977: 440-1.

26 But see Pickard-Cambridge 1946: 55.

27 See Dearden's estimates 1976: 19-20 and 182, n.23.

28 Pickard-Cambridge 1946: 68-74 allows for somewhat more; but see Arnott 1962: 2 on Vitruvius; Dover 1972: 18; Hourmouziades 1965: 59, in some skepticism of the *logeion,* puts forth a different trio of permanent fixtures: orchestra, auditorium and *skene.*

29 Pickard-Cambridge 1946: 36-7, 47, 105-6, 131-2 (placement); Arnott 1962: 45-55 supplies a useful catalogue of plays that include actions at altars; Dearden 1976: 46-8.

30 Does Euripides intend the comic effect of his having Helen take refuge at the stage altar, identify it as a tomb but, in the act of supplication, treat it

stone seat at the beginning of the *Oedipus Coloneus*.[31] In addition to the altar/tomb, statues of gods may have been used as props that could be brought out when relevant for a particular work, as in Euripides' *Hippolytus*.[32]

Much more problematic for a judgement of the extent of the visual representation of setting in Greek tragedy is the meaning of the term *skenographia* (σκηνογραφία), particularly in two passages that link it to fifth century tragedy. Aristotle lists *skenographia* as an innovation introduced by Sophocles into the theater (*Poetics* 1449a 18). Vitruvius, some centuries later, assigns its beginnings to the painter Agatharchus:

> First of all, at Athens Agatharcus, when Aeschylus was staging a tragedy, was in charge of the stage, and left a commentary on the subject. Instructed by this work, Democritus and Anaxagoras wrote on the same subject: how, once a certain place is decided upon as the center for the focus of the eyes and the lines of vision, one must respond to the lines by natural law, so that from an uncertain object, uncertain images of buildings in the stage sets may give back an appearance, and, those things which are illustrated in straight lines and planes may seem at different times to recede or protrude.[33]

A trusting interpretation of these passages allows the supposition that scenery was introduced to the Greek theater sometime before Aeschylus' death in 456. That is almost certainly not what they should be taken to mean. The passage from Aristotle presents at least two problems. Else has questioned the phrase as being disruptive of the smooth progress of the argument and he has suggested that it is a note from the margins wrongly introduced into the text.[34] But even if we allow the text to stand as it is, it is not clear

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as an altar?

[31] Arnott 1962: 57-65; this follows the implications of Pickard-Cambridge 1946: 36-7. On the *Persians* see, Dale 1969c: 119 and 1969b: 260-61).

[32] Pickard-Cambridge 1946: 52, 132; Arnott 1962: 65-8 (again with a useful catalogue of passages suggesting the presence of one or more statues as stage properties); Dearden 1965: 48-9.

[33] namque primum Agatharchus Athenis Aeschylo docente tragoediam ad scaenam fecit, et de ea commentarium reliquit. Ex eo moniti Democritus et Anaxagoras de eadem re scripserunt, quemadmodum oporteat, ad aciem oculorum radiorumque extentionem certo loco centro constituto, ad lineas ratione naturali respondere, uti de incerta re incertae imagines aedificiorum in scaenarum picturis redderent speciem et, quae in directis planisque frontibus sint figurata, alia abscedentia, alia prominentia esse videantur (VII.praef.11).

[34] Else 1957: 166; see the discussion by Seale 1982: 19.

what Aristotle uses *skenographia* to mean. Pollitt notes that "'Stage-painting' or 'scene-painting' are the most literal translations of *skenographia*, but that the term is also used in a more circumscribed and technical way to mean 'the art of depicting spatial perspective.'"[35] This latter meaning is clearly implied in the passage from Vetruvius quoted above. Agatharchus was a perspective painter of some repute, and it is likely that what he painted for the Greek theater was " an architectural design in perspective on the flat background" of the *skene*.[36] It must have made the facade so painted more realistically represent a palace or temple, but it would have been of necessity a decoration that was present throughout all the dramas of a festival.[37]

There is no evidence for scene painting of a sort that would particularize the acting area for a play or scene. The devices for moving decorated walls or panels into place are not attested for the fifth century. Even in the absence of this evidence, however, the presence of painted scenery to define the dramatic setting and not simply decorate the acting area is accepted, at least implicitly, by almost every scholar who writes on the dramas of the fifth century.[38] Pickard-Cambridge, drawing on an analogy to vase painting, offers a fairly conservative estimate of the means that may have been used to define the setting: scenes may have been suggested by "the slightest indications — a military tent by a shield hanging on the wall, a wood by a single tree, the seashore by a rock and a few shells."[39] Modest indications of the particularized setting of a play such as these seem much more likely to have been what was found in the fifth- century theater. The more elaborate efforts towards the realistic representation of setting by

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[35] Pollitt 1974: 236-247.

[36] Pickard-Cambridge 1946: 124 and n. 6; Arnott 1962: 74.

[37] Plutarch connects Agatharchus with Alcibiades (*Alcibiades* 16), which makes it difficult to date the painter early enough to have worked with Aeschylus. Some have suggested that the festival for which Agatharchus is said by Vitruvius to have painted the skene was an otherwise unattested revival of a play of Aeschylus after the poet's death. Moving the inception of scene painting to the last few decades of the fifth century does have the advantage of bringing the date of this development in the theater closer to the fourth century date otherwise assigned to the appearance of concern with perspective in Greek art. See Pollitt 1974: 242-5.

[38] Arnott is the notable exception.

[39] Pickard-Cambridge 1946: 123-4. But even he suggests that places were differentiated "perhaps by the use of painted canvas or screens or panels, which could be easily moved into position."

painted scenery of some sort may be more consistent with the apparent tendency of the fourth-century theater towards emphasizing performance and spectacle.[40] The drama of the fifth century, of course, does not lack spectacle, but in this early period spectacle inheres in the text and in the grand actions implicit there.[41]

Arnott's argument for a bare, largely undefined acting area is attractive because it makes clear how little the effective performance of these plays depends upon the external effects of the physical theater and how completely visual meaning is given definition in the words of the poets.[42] Yet this theory, as all others, rests upon unprovable assumptions about fifth-century dramatic conventions, and we must remain uncertain of the manner and extent to which the world defined in a play was made visually real in the theater. We can be confident, however, that whatever the audience saw in the theater was intended to reinforce or enhance the words they heard; in studying the texts as we must, without sure knowledge of the physical context of performance, we cannot but underestimate the significance that setting has for our understanding of these works.

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40 Implied in Aristotle, *Rhetoric* III, 1.4.

41 Agamemnon's entrance in Aeschylus' play was doubtless a very impressive sight; it gains significance for the drama, however, only in the lingering attention given it in the poetry of the drama, in particular, in the clash of wills over the tapestries.

42 On this see also Chancellor 1979: 142-3.

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